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The Life of Christ

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THE LIFE OF CHRIST

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Sc. D. Mastroi

I heard a great voice of much people in heaven saying, Alleluia

Rev. XIX: 1

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THE LIFE OF CHRIST

BY THE

REV. G. ROBINSON LEES, B.A.

Author of

"The Witness of the Wilderness," "Village Life in Palestine,"
"Life and Adventure Beyond Jordan," etc., etc.

With 63 full-page illustrations, reproduced from scenes modelled in wax by the celebrated Italian sculptor, D. Mastroianni

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PREFACE

PALESTINE is the world in miniature. Every physical feature of the habitable globe is seen in the land. And from the perpetual snow in the recesses of the Lebanon mountains to the tropical heat of the Dead Sea shore all gradations of climate of the regions of the earth are found within this small compass, in the short distance that could be traversed by an English express train in three hours.

Such a country might, therefore, be expected to offer the situation for a history destined to appeal to all people.

That the history should be extraordinary is not surprising, for some of the physical features of the country are out of the common order. A few brooks of water are there, but only one river; a river of greater interest than the mighty waters which irrigate vast continents, and carry on their bosom the commerce of empires; a river flowing down its tortuous bed in the greatest depression of the earth's crust to the Dead Sea, which has no outlet but the clouds of heaven.

A life, the life of Christ, is recorded in the history, and like the course of the river is unique, reaching the lowest depth of humiliation and rising from death to the highest glory.

Palestine is a land of marvellous contrasts. Grey is the prevailing tint of the open country — soft and rich on the olive trees, cheerless on the scanty grass, and harder still on the stone houses. But the grass in the spring-time is adorned with flowers of brilliant hue, whose colours can be discerned even in the moonlight. Gay costumes illuminate the dwelling places of the inhabitants of the towns and villages. And the sudden beauty of the after-glow of the setting sun kindles into unexpected splendour the dull grey landscape.

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Amid the faded glory of this wonderful land there rises the form of Christ, and everywhere memory is stirred by a subtle influence that awakens in the glens and valleys, echoes of the history in which He appears. The ancient pathways which intersect the country are haunted with the suggestion of His footsteps. Lingering traces come into sight as the mystery of the common way of life is unveiled in the light of other days.

All may be seen by observant eyes through the opening of the traveller's tent. There is, however, another view from the inner life of the people, the tent-dwellers of the wilderness who continue in the way of their forefathers down to their desert graves, unchanging and unsubdued; and the farming population indigenous to the soil of the Holy Land, never exterminated either by conquest or invasion. In their daily duties are characteristic touches which revive old scenes. But the view of their life from within bears a different aspect from the outlook of the traveller. The shepherd and his sheep, for instance, remind him of the One Flock and the Good Shepherd. They do a great deal more when the habitual thoughts of the Palestine shepherd are disclosed. They show that in the words of Jesus thoughts are expressed as far above the sordid mind of the ordinary keeper of the sheep as the heavens are above the earth.

A transcendant life is revealed in the thoughts of Jesus which He alone possessed, but one that He desired His followers to share with Him in a fellowship as intimate as that of the shepherd and sheep on the Palestine hills.

Inextricably woven with a vanished race are customs in daily use amongst the present inhabitants. Hospitality retains its ancient attributes. Entertained by this old custom our capacity for vision increases. We see Jesus in the home, and in the guest chamber the centre of the common life. There again His exalted thoughts, like the splash of colour on the landscape, transform the common mind. And as the idea of fellowship develops in the open-handed courtesy of a hospitable people, we are able to appreciate the meaning of the fellowship of Christ.

It is in His fellowship that we can penetrate truth contrary to common experience, the Truth He revealed for all mankind in the conditions and forms of thought of Palestine life.

Fellowship has a firmer root in the heart than in the region of the intellect. That is why there is a charm even in the names of places associated with the life of Christ, and His discourses and His parables gain in power through an acquaintance with the circumstances in which they were spoken.

During the six interesting and eventful years I spent in Palestine, the foundation of this book was laid. Not until I had time for mature reflection was it put into shape. But material for the structure gradually accumulated through the intimate acquaintance I made with all parts of the country in its relation to past ages and its condition in modern times. I was fortunately able to gain an entrance into the life of the people and gather knowledge of their point of view. In the village home, in the house in town, and in the tents of the desert spaces I saw life from within; life which helped me to realise the correspondence between the land and the history of its people. And more than this. It showed me how real was the life of Christ in the scenes depicted in the records of the Evangelists, the only documents from whence a knowledge of His life can be derived.

While they contain the elements of Truth so sublime that the mind of an ordinary Eastern man never could have conceived them, there are features in the narratives so intimately associated with the country that they indicate how this wonderland of the world corroborates the wonderful story. Though there is a human element in it, there is also the divine record of a Divine Life.

It is the heart that is touched by the Divine Life, and consequently the heart goes out readily to everything in Palestine; and everything there means a great deal more than anywhere else. But the intellect is quickened as well as the heart, and the two working together, in the land that reflects the presence of Christ in scenes which form an appropriate stage for His ac-

tivities, animate and sustain the personal relationship with Him which alone satisfies the human soul.

Bible students need the evidence offered by the Holy Land as much as the knowledge gained from their study of the original text, if they desire to be properly equipped for understanding and interpreting the Gospel story. The need is greater than ever. More interest in the country has been developed, and the desire for a right estimate of the meaning of the fellowship of Christ was never so intense as it is today.

The evidence which is based on textual criticism, on what is called the argument from within, is not sufficiently interior to inspire the life. Textual truth may enlighten a man's mind until he is intellectually certain, and still leave him cold. What is most vital to a theological student is personal relationship, and this will become more intelligible and more definite in circumstances that are familiar. It is supremely necessary for him to be able to visualise the scenery amid which the events occurred, and to breathe the atmosphere for life to be understood.

This necessity is more apparent when the stupendous claims made by textual critics of the Scriptures are fully realised, more particularly regarding that portion (the Pentateuch) which deals with the Tabernacle in the Wilderness and all that it implies. One of the greatest is Wellhausen who says (*Proleg.*, Eng. trans., p. 37): —" The truth is that the Tabernacle is a copy, not the prototype, of the Temple at Jerusalem." If his statement were true then the record of the Pentateuch is false. Unfortunately for him and others in agreement with him we have the evidence of the customs of wilderness people to which I have referred in the chapter on the " Larger Hospitality," which is of supreme importance in dealing with the subject of fellowship: the reason why it was written. Rénan, in his *Life of Jesus*, incidentally refers to hospitality, but I do not know of any other writer who has in any way dealt with the life of the people of Palestine that enables us to see how Jesus lived and moved amongst them.

While this effort is the result of independent thought, I have consulted with interest and profit the books in the list which follows, and I am conscious of impressions formed during a long course of study from many sources that I cannot definitely recall. It is the land of the Gospels and its people that have been of the greatest help to me.

As I have been writing this book, the supreme effort of my life, I have looked through past experience over the land where it was conceived, though years have passed since I lived in the country, and the life of Christ has been very real to me: not merely as a Man among men is He real, His transcendant life, His life Divine, is more plain to behold.

G. Robinson Lees.

St. Saviour's Vicarage,
Brixton Hill,
London, S. W.

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THE LIFE OF CHRIST

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CHAPTER I

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

When the reign of Herod the Great was drawing to its close there dwelt in the village of Nazareth, nestling in the highlands of Galilee, away from his ancestral home in Bethlehem-Judah, a man of singular worth. Although he was a carpenter, he belonged to the house and lineage of David. In the same village lived a maiden of the same royal stock as Joseph the carpenter, to whom he was betrothed; and Mary the Nazareth maiden became the mother of the world's Redeemer, Jesus Christ.[1] Out of the shadows of that far-distant time rise scenes of absorbing interest. The life that is the light of men fills those

[1] Outside the New Testament the references to Jesus are very meagre but very valuable. Josephus, in his great work, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, has two, one in Book XVIII. chapter iii. 3, which is of uncertain merit, some scholars rejecting altogether its evidence on the ground that it is an interpolation of a scribe; others defend it. Conclusive proof of the historical existence of Jesus is found in Book XX. chapter ix. 1, in the words "Jesus, who is called Christ," and their context. Tacitus alludes to the death of Jesus under the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, as an incident of little consequence, but to us it is precious. *Annals*, XV. iv. 4: "Auctor Nominis ejus Christus, Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat" ("The author of this name (*i.e.* Christian), Christus, was executed in the reign of Tiberius by the Procurator Pontius Pilate"). The Talmud refers to Jesus in terms of contempt and bitterness. Even this sort of allusion is important, if unpleasant, because it certifies His existence, and the Talmud contains the oral traditions, precepts, and interpretations of the Jews committed to writing in the early part of the second century; it shows that Jesus was known to the Jews who would not believe on Him. Lucian (*De Morte Peregrini*, XI.) derisively speaks of Jesus as μεγας = "the great one." Neumann, in his critical work, *Jesus* ii. 21, writing against

scenes with an eternal gain, and men have never ceased to wonder how that life became so great from apparently a small beginning when they have failed to comprehend its mighty source.

Every devout Jew looked for the advent of the Messiah. Preparation for His coming had already been made in Hebrew prophecy; and in the strain of the inspired poetry of the nation there was an earnest expectation of Some One Who would establish a new kingdom for the Children of Israel; they never expected a new kingdom for the children of men. They never thought of the Messiah as the Son of God appearing in the universal sense of humanity, but as a man restricted to the confines of their own race endowed with an aptitude for dominion and a royal power for display. They looked for a Saviour from the enemies of their country, and in their regard for temporal power they lost sight of their spiritual foes and their need of deliverance from a greater bondage than Roman rule. The light that lighteth every man seemed to have flickered into the socket. Moral darkness overspread the earth. Vast changes were taking place in the world. It was not only its political systems that were being overthrown; its religions had lost their meaning, and there was neither security in power nor stability in faith. Nothing short of the creation of a new order of human life was needed to lift the world out of the selfish sphere in which its common thought and action resided.

The two persons most intimately associated at first with this new order of human life were Joseph and Mary. God chose the Nazareth maiden of the royal house of David as the instrument of His purpose for making a new revelation to mankind. The new revelation appeared in a new birth, the Incarnation, in which God identified Himself with man for man to become identified with God.

After betrothal, when man and maid had been formally pre-

the genealogies, says: "Joseph's descent from the house and family of David seems sufficiently well established by the irreproachable and early testimony of Paul (Rom. i. 3). Paul did not simply infer the fact, but received it from others; on this point all primitive Christendom is agreed."

sented to one another, they occupied a different position in the eyes of the people: the maiden more than her future husband. Her movements, always carefully guarded, became even more restricted within the presence of the members of her family. She was bound by contract to another life, a guarantee that carried with it the assurance of a sense of right conduct. There was something definite for her to do; the contemplated change in her life had to be considered, and with due solemnity, for a married woman held a place of honour amongst her sex in the East.

Alone with her thoughts while performing her daily duties, Mary doubtless pondered over her future, and made preparations for her marriage by skilfully embroidering her raiment of needlework [2] in which to meet the bridegroom, unconscious of her future in God's keeping, and of His plan.

One day her meditations were suddenly interrupted. A radiant light streamed through the door of the cottage in which she lived, and her heart leaped in response to a celestial visitor's greeting in the familiar language of her people: "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." [3] The message contained more than a complimentary address. It conveyed to her the gladdest news that a Hebrew woman ever wished to hear, that she should be the mother of the Christ of God, and, what was even more startling, by the power of the Divine spirit.[4] Mary wondered

[2] Ps. xlv. 14. [3] St. Luke i. 28, 35.

[4] St. Matthew's words, "of the Holy Ghost," suggest a Divine creative energy, as in Gen. i. 2, and Ps. civ. 30, quickening the germ of life. For those who find a physiological difficulty in accepting the Virgin Birth the following notes are appended:

On July 31st, 1911, Professor Ray Lankester announced in *The Daily Telegraph* that a Mons. Bataillon had succeeded, by pricking with a fine needle the surface of the minute black sphere of a frog's egg, carefully preserved from male influence, and in causing it to develop in a perfectly regular manner, to become a tadpole, and then a young frog. Thus, then, the possibility of a parthenogenetic reproduction in so high a form of life as a vertebrate animal has been demonstrated.

My friend, Dr. Kesteven, who has given me the above information, further states: "We cannot explain how such conception occurs in such lowly forms as silkworms, bees, ants, and snails. None the less it does

how the promise could be fulfilled. News of an elderly relative's joy in the province of Judea helped her to realize the truth, and a visit to the home of her cousin Elizabeth,[5] the aged wife of Zacharias the priest, confirmed her faith.

On her return to Nazareth the glad tidings fostered in her heart, and the light of a new dawn in her eyes could not be hidden from her mother; Joseph also had to be told the wonderful news, as a man demands with his bride the fulfilment of the guarantee of right conduct agreeable with the honour of his house. He could not have been unmoved. The righteous feeling in his heart for the purity of his espoused wife might have harassed and perplexed him; he may have been bewildered about his duty, and not have had a clearly defined idea what to do. God knew the extent of his trial, and he was assured in a dream[6] there was no cause for him to fear; his marriage, therefore, followed the betrothal in the usual course. In conformity with the severity of Oriental customs, he would have sent his wife to her people branded with shame, if a better motive from superior knowledge had not been registered in his heart. The reason why he acted contrary to custom is said to have been Divine intervention. Without that statement his attitude towards the woman he had taken for his wife is incomprehensible.

Still, the future had to be faced; the reputation of his wife in the village had to be considered. While thus embarrassed with the problem of the future, news came to the village that a decree had been issued by the Roman Emperor[7] for a census

so occur, but we do not understand it because we have labelled the phenomenon in these animals 'a parthenogenesis.'"

See also the testimony of Professor G. J. Romanes in *Darwin and after Darwin*, p. 119: "It may now be added . . . that the earlier stages of parthenogenesis have been observed to occur sporadically in all sub-kingdoms of the Metazoa, including the Vertebrata, and even in the highest class, the Mammalia. These earlier stages consist in spontaneous segmentations of ovum; so that, even if a virgin has conceived and borne a son, and even if such a fact in the human species has been unique, still it would not betoken any breach of physiological continuity."

[5] St. Luke i. 39, 40.

[6] St. Matt. i. 20.

[7] St. Luke ii. 1–3.

to be taken in his vast dominions. As a concession to popular sentiment, and out of deference to Herod, the King, every man was to be enrolled according to his tribe in its ancestral home. So Joseph took Mary with him to the land of their fathers.[8] It was a serious undertaking in her condition, the only means of transport being an ass on which she could ride with the usual articles accompanying Eastern travellers, beds, really quilts stuffed with wool, which served to make the rider more comfortable during the day, as well as for repose at night; and other things needful for a long journey. Joseph walked beside the beast of burden.

They began their journey in the winter of the year 749 of the foundation of Rome (A.U.C.), five years before the recognized date of the nativity (*i.e.* B.C. 5). Herod's death in the spring of the following year, March 13th, 750 (A.U.C.) [9] helps us to fix the date; the events associated with his rule before he died render more assistance, and the Roman historian Tacitus, who records the presence of Cyrenius, under whom the "taxing" (census) was made, in the East at that time, states that he subdued a Cilician tribe when Cilicia was a province of Syria, over which he ruled as Proconsul from 747 to 751 A.U.C. (B.C. 7 to 3).[10]

In December the work in the fields was finished, and the men of the agricultural country of Israel were free to go to the place of enrolment without interfering with their labour. No other time would have been so convenient, and, as there was already dissatisfaction with the ruling power, it was necessary that work should not be interrupted, lest by a further cause of complaint the turbulent multitudes gathering for the census might be incited to revolt. The selection of the ancestral homes of the people as places of enrolment would have aggravated rather than allayed popular feeling if the men had been called from the land when the land called for them.

[8] St. Luke ii. 4, 5.

[9] Josephus, *Ant.* Book XVII. chap. vi. note 2, Whiston's Ed.

[10] Tacitus, *Annals*, III. 48, note in Furneaux's Ed. Quirinus (Latin name for Cyrenius) appears to have been Proconsul of Syria B.C. 7–3.

Starting from Nazareth in the morning with their faces set towards the south, Joseph and Mary passed down the hillside road to the great plain of Esdraelon. Across its north-eastern corner they travelled, by the city of Nain, over the ridge of Little Hermon to the Valley of Jezreel flanked by Mount Gilboa and reached their resting-place at nightfall in the wayside khan (inn) under the palm-trees in the neighbourhood of Scythopolis in the Jordan Valley.[11] The valley road was a better road for a woman like Mary, particularly in December, when the weather in the central mountain region of the country is capricious, often by its severity contributing to the discomfort of Eastern travel. Down the Jordan Valley, where there is no winter, the sun shone vigorously and verdure smiled in delightful contrast to the highlands. From Scythopolis the road led first through the rich fields of the wide domain of the Decapolitan city to the narrowest part of the Ghor (*i.e.*, the Rift). Thence from the crest of the low hills overlooking the gorge of the descending river fleeting glimpses of the jungle by its side were gained before the travellers approached the long stretch of apparently level ground. Rugged heights rose above them on the west, and beyond the eastern bank of the river loftier mountains formed the giant barrier of the Jordan Plain. Memorable associations with these mountain scenes and the sacred river brought the past history of their people and the prospect of a greater future before the minds of the two travellers.

As the happy pair moved towards their destination they had ample leisure for thought; joyous nature round them, though in places disordered by its prolific growth, lifted up their hearts. It is not difficult to realize to some extent the subject of their meditation. The anticipation of a great event fills the mind with wonderful visions of its effect on the future. There is the sense of a perpetual enlargement of life; imagination might, therefore, rear a great fabric of expectation. There was but one certainty in it, that the hope in

[11] For routes to Jerusalem, see pages 114, 349.

which they shared was the gift of God, and they would be content with what lay immediately before them. Every step brought them nearer to the end of their journey, where Joseph would see something more than a coincidence in their arrival at the City of David. Awaiting him there was a compensation for all the confusion of his mind and the embarrassment of his position, something that would make life seem to have more substance and more value. As Mary drew near the climax of her consecration, and the glory of her womanhood, a new joy must have filled her soul. She could not have been unaware of her acceptance of the will of God as a process, and not merely an incident, in her life. The contemplation of the mystery within her, and the burden of her destiny, would increase the apprehension of her responsibility; but the hallowing influence of God's presence would reconcile her mind and renew her strength for the coming days of pain and triumph.

The tinkle of the distant camel-bell kept them in the sphere of their daily life. They saw the long train of heavy-laden beasts carrying their loads to busy market-places. A constant stream of traders, with their merchandise, and pleasure-seekers gay with bright equipage and rich costumes, passed them on the way. In the khans at the side of the road rest was found at night amidst the throng of travellers to the Herodian cities below the western hills. Palm-groves and gardens extending from these cities to their last resting-place in Jericho in the evening of their fourth day from home increased the interest of their journey. An early start next morning enabled them to reach Bethlehem in one long day more, but not before the gathering shadows of the bordering hills crept along the deep rift that Joseph and Mary had gradually left behind them, as they toiled up the lonesome mountain track in front, until vine-clad heights appeared with sides well clothed with groves of trees.

Astride one of these hills rested the town of Bethlehem, their destination. From the path below the ridge on which the town is built they saw the brilliant colours from the rays of the set-

ting sun shed their glory on the home of their fathers, and the fringe of olive-trees and trailing vines darkening below the grey stone houses lit with varied tints. They climbed the steep ascent with exulting hearts, longing for rest in the bosom of scenes rich with historic memories in the guest-chamber of an old friend of their famous name; but, alas! they arrived so late that no vacant place was prepared for their reception. If the last day's journey had been from Jerusalem they would have entered the town in the morning, when many a guest-chamber would have been open with a homely welcome for the two lone travellers from distant Galilee.

Slowly they turned to the khan with a wavering hope of better fortune. As they passed through the gateway Joseph looked towards the *lewan*, the raised platform on the side of the square enclosure with the accommodating shelter of a roof; but its space was fully occupied, "there was no room for them in the inn." [12] A dull red charcoal fire below the *lewan*, and dusky oil-lamps hanging from the rafters above cast a fitful glare on the swarthy faces of the motley crowd on the only resting-place for visitors. Outside the *lewan* in the gloom of the open space beneath the sky, where wearied beasts were tethered to rings fastened to the wall or pegs let into the ground, neither man nor woman ever spent the night, even when guests were numerous. If there were no room for them on the *lewan* they gathered round the charcoal fire, the women apart from the men, away from the camels and horses and mules and asses in the area.

There must have been a cave or recess, an opening on the side of the limestone hill that formed a boundary for the khan. There are caves below the wall of the khan on the way to

[12] St. Luke ii. 7. Κατάλυμα is a public inn, free for all people. An attendant without proprietary rights offers his services in various ways for reward. The same word is used for guest-chamber in St. Mark xiv. 14 and St. Luke xxii. 11. It has a wide application in its reference to visitors, and therefore depends to some extent on the context for its true interpretation; but in all cases it is based on the idea of free hospitality. Πανδοχεῖον in St. Luke x. 34 is an inn kept by a host who demands payment for the reception of visitors.

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

And laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn

Luke II: 7

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

For we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him

Matthew II: 2

Jericho, a cave under the hill of the Khan Lebban, a cave at Khan Minyeh on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and many in the ruined towns. Such a recess serves as a stable into which a man puts his animal for greater security; it would have been a providential retreat for a woman in pain. Though dark and damp no other occupant would share it save her faithful man and their beast of burden.

Amidst the squalor and musty odours spread by the night wind, and the noisy rattle of rings, and the movements of restless animals, there in the long dark watches of the night Mary bore her travail. When the birth-pangs began Joseph went for aid; he fetched the nearest woman to help a woman in her need. No man, not even her man, must be with an Eastern woman at her childbirth. Even an outcast's child might have had a better shelter in some lowly abode where life was less forbidding, in some place where womanly tenderness was ready for all who suffer. A khan is unthinkable for the birth of a child. Who could have imagined and invented the birthplace of the Christ as the stable of an Eastern khan?

In this cheerless and inhospitable spot, with its miscellaneous assembly of travellers engrossed with their own convenience, oblivious of any need but their own, the Virgin brought forth her first-born Son. Attendants performed the simple offices prescribed for every birth from the days of old [13] to the present time, rubbed the child's body with oil to keep Him well, with salt to make Him strong, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes for His body, arms, and legs to grow perfectly straight, and laid Him within the little curb of clay on the floor in which the provender of the beasts is placed for their faring: not a manger with which a Western man is familiar. The word "manger" [14] is used on account of the difficulty of translating the Greek word into equivalent English. It is a place for food, and that place is on the ground within a little curb that keeps the chopped straw from being scattered over the floor.

[13] Ezek. xvi. 4; St. Luke ii. 7.

[14] Φάτνη (πατέομάι, I eat) is a place for food, hence the use of the word "manger" in the English Bible.

On the plain below the khan another scene was being enacted; an event, as thrilling as the birth was surprising, occurred to men of the lowliest degree in the land of Judah. The more thoughtful amongst its patriots anxiously looked for the coming of their King, and none of them had more time for thought than the shepherds of its hills and plains; none of them had more open minds, free from the prejudice of the age and the particular interest of the stirring times in which they lived. Besides, a suggestiveness in the fields of Bethlehem kept the Messianic hope alive. David the shepherd had been called from them to a kingly throne from whose line the Christ should come; it was not inappropriate that the shepherds in the fields should hear the call to welcome Him.

Sometimes, in December, warm nights follow the hot days that break through the storms of an Eastern winter, and shepherds take advantage of the change and pasture their flocks under the shelter of the hills. While thus engaged the news for which they had waited long came from the vault above them flushed with the early dawn. Stars still glittered in the Syrian sky when something more than the dawn over the distant heights of Moab seemed to fill the air; a light celestial enfolded the keepers of the sheep, and "they were sore afraid." Through the veil of glory that wrapped the watching men a message came in familiar words with unfamiliar sound. A Messenger announced the wondrous birth, and angelic hosts sang the songs of Heaven. The angelic messenger said to the frightened shepherds: "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger." [15]

"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy" are words in common use; even today these words announce the birth of a son. The expectant father must always wait for the news

[15] St. Luke ii. 10–12.

away from his dwelling, generally in the garden or field below the village. If a son is born a friend runs down the hill shouting in loud and joyous tones: "Bsharrah, Bsharrah," *i.e.* "Good tidings, good tidings." "Behold, I bring you good tidings, for unto you a son is born" is a description of the attitude and speech of the messenger, and the happy father hurries home to name the child. If a girl appears there are no good tidings. The friend walks slowly and disconsolately down the hill to the disappointed parent and offers his condolence with the news.

The shepherds, satisfied with the heavenly origin of the message they had received, hastened to Bethlehem to offer their congratulations in the ordinary manner of the peasant folk of the country for the birth of a child. The place to which they were directed was easily accessible, being open to the public without charge and free from all restrictions. No other place could have been more eminently suitable for the birth of the Saviour of the world than a public inn, and such an inn, where all sorts and conditions of men lodge for a night on their earthly pilgrimage. A palace would have been out of the reach of these eager shepherds, and any other place too limited for an appeal to mankind. The home of a particular person belonging to a class carries with it the restraint of the environment in which it is placed. It was inevitable that the birthplace of the Messiah, on Whom the world would make a demand more than had ever been made on any other man, should represent an opportunity that could apply to all people.

The clothes in which the child was swaddled formed, with the place where He was laid, the sign for the shepherds. Provision had been made by the mother in joyous anticipation of the birth consistent with the honour of the family to which she belonged. If garments worn out by age could no longer serve their purpose, the rank of the family would be indicated by the embroidered work on the clothing prepared by the expectant mother.

A new kindness dawned on the world with that happy morning when God appeared in a little child, the fairest emblem of earth, for men to learn that of such is the kingdom of Heaven; and as the fleeting years roll by the kindest day in every year is the day we keep in memory of the wondrous birth. It stirs the primary impulses of man's being where true life has its springs and desires are born. In that passing moment he feels the breath of the Eternal, whispering through an open door, an open heart, for life's warm currents to flow and make the world of men more comfortable and more joyous. And the world called Christian has in a measure responded to the message from God. The peace and joy that came with His gift are visible in many a Christian home, and generous giving arises from the heart that is moved by Christian love. This good feeling dies in some men almost immediately; in others it declines slowly and gradually under the pressure of the things of earth, if there be no room for the permanent abode of the Divine Spirit. The influence of Divine affluence has touched them, enough to show how much more it might have been, enough to prove that the Christ Who came still lives to lead men into an abundant life. In other men the revelation of the love of God remains, the new life from above begins, and the man with the Spirit of Christ within him has received something that will transform the face of life and death.

It is not only salvation, nor the gentle leading of the Child, that came on that first Christmas Day; on Him the government [16] of the world was laid, and since that day the civilized world has altered its date and changed its outlook. All time before the birth of Christ is B.C.; the years that follow are the years of our Lord, A.D. Although this mode of reckoning was not introduced until the first half of the sixth century, His rule had created so profound an impression of its value that it became the dominant factor in the life of the West. Its continuance is a constant recognition of the might of that influ-

[16] Isa. ix. 6, 7.

ence on the minds and hearts of men. There is something more in it than man can devise for changing the computation of the events of all time in the highest civilization the world has ever known. The superintending providence of God and His sustaining power over Christian men have borne the responsible part; any other influences that may have been at work were merely incidental occurrences which aided the main purpose.

Long ago the need for a slight alteration of the date of the year of our Lord was discovered when it was too late to make a change owing to the extent of its use. The date of the Nativity is five years earlier, 5 B.C. It is corroborated both by the death of Herod, which took place in the spring of 750 of the foundation of Rome (A.U.C.), and the testimony of St. Luke, who states that John the Baptist began his ministry in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar.[17] As his reign began in A.D. 11, when he shared the authority of Augustus, the date of John's ministry would be A.D. 26. At that time Jesus was about thirty years old.

There is no adequate reason for altering the accepted day of His birth, although December 25th was not kept as a festival in the East before the time of St. Chrysostom, and was then received on the tradition of the Roman Church. It was conjectured, with some probability, that the time was chosen to substitute the purified joy of a Christian festival for the licence of the Saturnalia; but the reason for the selection does not imply that December 25th was not the day. The chief objection to this date is the difficulty of believing in the pasturing of the flocks at night in winter.[18] The weather varies in December and is sometimes very warm; the opportunity would then be eagerly seized by the shepherds to feed their flocks in

[17] St. Luke iii. 1–3.

[18] "In six years' residence in Palestine I remember only one very cold Christmas; twice I rode to Bethlehem on Christmas Eve without an overcoat in really warm weather; once I went shooting on the day after Christmas Day wearing a pith helmet on account of the heat; wind and rain at other times prevailed."— AUTHOR.

the fields below the hill on which stands the ancient town.

At the eastern end of Bethlehem, on the crest of the ridge, there is a permanent memorial of the Nativity, fashioned in the days of warlike men, and for over 1,600 years it has withstood the ravages of time and the strife of nations. While the town has often been destroyed, the memorial church, like a fortress in appearance and often in use, has remained. No sign of the wealth of Christendom is visible; it is the endurance of its faith rather than its riches that is here commemorated. The poor and the meek find in it something which is more in accord with their hope than the merely splendid architecture of a stately cathedral. The rich and great see there also the path of peace, a rest for weary feet, and for the broken heart a place of healing. The low doorway of the entrance is an immediate sign of the humble spirit that is necessary to appreciate the meaning of the nature of the memorial. In the centre of the building, down a flight of narrow steps, is the grotto of the Nativity. A silver star on the floor, with the Latin inscription round it, "Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus nature est," marks the spot where succeeding generations of Christians have worshipped in the firm belief that it is the place where our Lord was born. Justin Martyr,[19] a native of Palestine, the famous Christian and Apologist, who lived less than a hundred years after, believed in the site, which was then well known, and it is extremely unlikely that any difficulty would arise about its identity. Public inns stand for ages, and the one in Bethlehem would be still in existence when Justin Martyr declared his acceptance of the site of the birthplace of His Lord. Hadrian, the Roman Emperor in the year A.D. 134, found certain Holy Places, and in his anger destroyed the various buildings connected with them; but the signs of their existence were not entirely obliterated.

The Holy Places of Palestine are not all authentic; most of them were never intended to be more than representations.

[19] Justin Martyr was born at Flavia Neapolis (ancient Shechem, modern Nablous) A.D. 103 and died A.D. 166.

They were selected originally for teaching pilgrims the facts connected with the history associated with Jesus, and impressing upon them, through these objects, their reality. Unfortunately, the Teachers have not always been explicit; their words sometimes conveyed more than they were expected to mean, and what was once the illustration of an object associated with a fact became the object itself.

The site of the Nativity is more real than representative, and it is reasonably probable than the Grotto of the Nativity is the place of the Lord's birth. Palestine is a country whose people in all ages have expressed their feelings in objects on which the memory rests with veneration. There may be seen today dolmens, stone circles, little heaps of stones, twisted twigs, and even rags on sticks, besides buildings, that carry the mind through intervening years to remote antiquity. In the Bible there is frequent allusion to places of interest connected with events and men. The power of association has never decreased, and it is not unlikely that those who loved their Lord would mark the place of His first appearing and keep it in remembrance. Men believe without compunction in things relating to secular history and social custom why, then, should it be deemed incredible to accept the assurance of pious men whose strong faith has left similar marks on their country? Customs still prevail in the East, mentioned in the Bible, that have been transmitted by succeeding generations. There can be no strain on the intelligence for men to believe the evidence of enduring faith when it is accompanied by an illustration that presents in concrete form an indisputable fact.

The attentions of artists, directed by a reverent desire to depict the Nativity of our Lord, have not always been consonant with the knowledge required to represent the scene. Oxen and sheep, which are never found in the precincts of a public inn, have been inserted as necessary adjuncts to a proper appreciation of the event, and various additional features included, to make an appropriate background for the satisfaction of people familiar with enclosures and resting-

places for cattle in their own country of a more permanent character than a public inn, where travelling men and travelling beasts remain for the night and pass in the morning. All these things hinder rather than help the understanding of the true nature of the circumstances of our Lord's birth, and cause men to deny the more likely features associated with it which assist the mind in appreciating the fact. The simplicity of the scene is not enhanced by invention; it may even be destroyed; whereas a memorial, though unaccompanied by original marks of identification sufficiently strong to compel men to believe, may have attached to it something which will confirm their faith in the fact itself.

As the large number of people in the town would soon disperse after the census, a room would then be available for the Mother and the Child, and Joseph no doubt took advantage of the opportunity to provide more suitable quarters for them, so that when the Magi arrived they visited Mary and her Son in "the house," [20] thus showing the reasonableness of the proceedings of a man like Joseph, whose object was to care for those in his charge.

The absence of descriptive details in the incidents of the birth proves how the fact itself was fixed on the minds of the narrators of the story. Very ordinary people would scarcely have controlled their desire to proclaim the news to the people of the town, and the first historians might not unreasonably have alluded to minute and trivial incidents connected with the event, and embellished them with their imagination. Nothing irrelevant is introduced by the writers of the Gospels; their statement has a sanctity in its reticence which carries with it an impression so profound in its difference from all narratives of ordinary human biographies, especially Eastern stories of life, that it bears the aspect of truth. Important and necessary incidents are alone recorded: the Circumcision and the Presentation in the Temple by St. Luke, the visit of the Wise Men from the East, and the Flight into Egypt by St.

[20] St. Matt. ii. 11.

Matthew. One account seems to supplement the other.

The Circumcision was on the eighth day after the birth.[21] If the Mother and Child had not been removed from their temporary shelter before this time, the rite of Circumcision would require such attention by the Rabbis in Bethlehem that a guest-chamber would have been found for them. The name of Jesus was given to the Child on this day, a name in frequent use amongst the Jews, that was destined to acquire a significance which has a momentous meaning for all who love their Lord. Jesus is His Personal name, and Christ the title of His Office as the Messiah.

The Presentation in the Temple

On the fortieth day from the birth the Virgin presented herself to the Priest, and the Child to the Lord,[22] in the Temple at Jerusalem, and she made the customary offering of two turtle-doves, according to the law prescribed for the poor. Her appearance with the Child was a sign, to one who longed to see the fulfilment of promise, that the Messiah had come. The aged Simeon, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, saw the Child and was satisfied; his heart was moved in grateful acknowledgment of the scene before him, and he uttered words that will never die: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."[23] No further reference is made to him; something more might have been welcome, but again we may reckon that the Evangelist was guided by the Spirit of God in this slight allusion to one of the saints of old, preserving only the fact of his recognition of the Messiah.

A few more words are used to describe the Prophetess Anna; her tribe is even mentioned.[24] It showed there lingered still in the minds of the people the tribal names, and some of their members were known. She might have been identified by her description, while Simeon is lost in the mists of con-

[21] St. Luke i. 59; ii. 21.
[22] St. Luke ii. 22–4.
[23] St. Luke ii. 25–32.
[24] St. Luke ii. 36–8.

jecture. Only two old people of all those assembled in the Temple and its courts saw the wondrous Babe, and realized the greatness of God's gift to men. Mary must have been cheered by their faith and encouraged by this mark of God's everlasting mercy, as she and Joseph marvelled at their prophetic insight; and, as the words of fateful meaning dropped into her mind from Simeon's lips [25] and struck her heart with foreboding for the future, she could rest in the assurance of the mercy of God which is over all His people.

The Visit of the Wise Men

Great events in the ancient world were usually connected with some movement of the heavenly bodies. The births and deaths of great men were certainly frequently associated with sidereal phenomena, and this idea prevailed even in England for many centuries.

In the early days of the science of astronomy the stars in their courses were studied in a reverent spirit. The desire for information about them arose from man's need of religion, not so much for the gratification of the mind as the satisfaction of the soul. In the deepest recess of man's nature there is a craving for something outside himself, something more dependable, and this shows a need which no other man can supply. Guides innumerable have been selected for discovering its real source, but all have failed that have not led to the Infinite and Eternal God.

The clear, tranquil nights of the East, with their mighty skies and shining stars, filled the untutored mind with awe, and devout and thoughtful men with respect. Above them was something so vast, something so distant, yet so present, they felt in their sublime conception of the harmony of the heavens a relationship between themselves and the Great Creator. Eternal Destiny seemed behind the glories of those constellations, and the Power, that guided them in their move-

[25] St. Luke ii. 35: "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also."

ments and kept them in their places, directed also the footsteps of mankind. As their knowledge of them increased they became conscious of their acquaintance with the Power which men recognized, from the nature of their occupation, as lying beyond their ordinary understanding. Astrologers were on that account reckoned as men able to interpret, from the invisible sympathy of heavenly bodies with human life, the destinies of men. They were the priests of the temple of the universe; to them men went for instruction and aspiration. When mysterious portents overshadowed their minds, when the future seemed all adventure, the anxious sought the wise men for advice and direction, honoured them for their wisdom, and paid homage to them for their power. Thus King Nebuchadnezzar treated Daniel [26] as an interpreter of dreams and made him chief of the wise men of his kingdom, above all the soothsayers and astrologers connected with the court. In the passing of time the people's attitude towards Magi changed, the reverent spirit disappeared, and the astrologers became channels of inquiry or merely instruments for furthering the causes of those who had the means to employ them. Simon Magus,[27] the Sorcerer in Samaria, was an example of the degradation of a lofty calling.

The Magi who went to Bethlehem in quest of the King were in all probability Persians, and priests, acquainted, through the connection of Persian rule over Judea, with the Messianic hope of its people. In their study of the universe they had found that human destiny was not bound by the limitations of their knowledge, and they looked for more than they had ever obtained. It is when men are alone, and at their highest and best, that some token of immortality stirs within them and intimates to them an eternal purpose. Such an experience is not present at all times, but when it comes it gives the most intense feelings of reality that we know, and men who have had the experience are sure of it.

The appearance of a particular star might easily have been

[26] Dan. ii. 46–9. [27] Acts viii. 9–11.

unnoticed by the world of men, and yet have awakened in the hearts of the Magi the great desire that caused them to leave their homes and start on a long and perilous journey. If they had not been convinced of the interpretation they had put on the presence of the star they would never have left their luxurious homes for a weary march across an arid desert whose sand covered the bones of many unfortunate travellers. They toiled on, undaunted either by the length of their journey or the difficulties they had to encounter. They inquired first in Jerusalem, where they were most likely to obtain authentic information, for surely in the capital there would be tidings of the new King, and at the palace of the reigning monarch they might expect direction to his place of birth. The rumour of their arrival in the Holy City and their inquiry would be known amongst the inhabitants, and speculation excited. "Where is he that is born king?" was a question calculated to arouse the people and alarm the old monarch. Any movement amongst the inhabitants beyond the usual gossip of the city might bring disastrous consequences. Herod's tyranny had taught them to exercise a restraint over their feelings; but his teaching produced no effect on himself: fear alone might keep him within bounds, and fear mingled with rage dwelt in the old man's heart as he instituted inquiries of the authorities of the Holy City. There was only one answer to his question: that in Bethlehem the Messiah would be born.[28] Herod then secretly called the Wise Men and asked them when they first saw the star, told them to go to Bethlehem and return with the report of their discovery, that he also might pay homage to the young king.

On leaving Jerusalem the star appeared again, and "when they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."[29] Evidently they had lost sight of it on their journey. Its absence, however, had not deterred them; having once believed in the sign, they pursued their way. Now they are assured of their mission, and follow the star to their destination, where

[28] St. Matt. ii. 5, 6. [29] St. Matt. ii. 10.

they paid homage to the young Child and presented gifts,[30] content with the result of their long wanderings.

A few words in St. Matthew's Gospel describe their visit; we are left to ponder over the manifestation of the Christ to these Gentiles and the significance of their gifts. They may only have been the products of their country. The Church has made something more of them, and we shall doubtless see in the Epiphany of the Lord and the tribute of the Magi something unrecorded by the Evangelist. A deep truth lies in the homage of the men from the East. Their attitude and offerings cannot be without a purport. It is the reverence of wisdom for innocence and beauty, the beauty of holiness. A little child brings men nearer to heaven than all the speculations of philosophers and the reason of the greatest minds; and the presence of the Lord in the Child in Bethlehem was the answer to the deep craving of the heart of man for the supreme object of its affection.

Their desire accomplished, the Magi returned home by another route without informing the Jewish King of the success of their undertaking. He soon knew of their departure, and his anger blazed forth in all its fury. Fearing the rise of a Pretender to his throne, he ordered all the children of Bethlehem under the age of two years to be slain. Although no reference is found in secular history to the Massacre of the Innocents, such an omission is not serious, as an event of so little importance was not likely to be mentioned. It was only one of many acts of blood of the cruel King. Bethlehem was a small town of few inhabitants, and probably not very many children would be slain.

Warned by God in a dream of Herod's intention, Joseph secretly left Bethlehem for Egypt, the place of refuge for those whose lives were no longer safe in Judea. With Mary and the Child he passed along the cobbled street through the city gate for the road to the south. A toilsome journey lay before them. The first part of it was over the mountains of

[30] St. Matt. ii. 11,

Hebron. From this resting-place Joseph turned to the west, to the mountains whose tracks led him down their steep sides to the foothills by the Phœnician Plain. A more gentle way and a warmer climate followed the precipitous paths of the wild mountain region. But a desert had to be crossed, the waste of sand and stones beyond the palm groves and cactus hedges of Gaza. Having escaped from the sword of Herod, he had no doubt in his mind about the safety of the young Child, though the desert might be filled with alarms. The hand of God guided his footsteps; the eye of God watched over his charge.

Onward Joseph pressed, with hope abounding, along the faint track of the restless sand. He must have experienced a singular exaltation, walking with the beast on which was laid a precious burden, in the fresh air of the morning, in the white noonday when the dancing light flickered before him, and in the cool evening as the radiant glow of the red sun sinking in the west filled the distant horizon with fantastic charm. Lying beside that burden in the dead silence of the midnight hours, whether in the tent of a nomad tribe under the luminous light of the stars, or behind a rock for shelter from the wind over the desert spaces, the faithful man would feel in the haunting presence of an invisible power so very real to him the sense of security.

Each day opened before him the long reaches of the desert pathway, until there appeared the promise of rest in a distant picture of white domes and stately buildings fringed with cool green palm trees, set in the deep blue of the eastern sky—Egypt at last.

Large and influential communities of his fellow countrymen had long been settled there. The Jews of Alexandria had a synagogue in Jerusalem [31] for their own use when visiting the city of their fathers. Joseph would find work in the land of Egypt for the support of Mary and the Child until the tyranny of Herod had passed away.

[31] Acts vi. 9.

CHAPTER II

THE HOME IN NAZARETH

When Joseph and Mary heard of Herod's death they left Egypt and sought again their home in Nazareth with the young child Jesus.

Nothing was said about His wondrous birth. A natural reticence respecting the miraculous conception is not surprising; if prematurely divulged it was likely to cause unfavourable social comment. The term "Thy father," afterwards addressed to Jesus in speaking of Joseph, was not a means of suppressing the truth, but in accord with social custom. A proper time and suitable atmosphere were necessary for making public a mystery so profound. The amazing boldness of St. Matthew in stating that the birth of Jesus was supernatural shows that the fact had been made known after the disciples had been prepared to receive it by the gradual unfolding of His personality and power, and by the precious truths revealed in His teaching.

The information about His birth must have been derived in the first instance from His mother; it was confirmed by the Divine likeness in His life, and substantiated by His own claim to a Divine origin. His followers accepted the fact by faith. In no other way can it be conceived, for it is vain to imagine that either historical or scientific evidence can be arranged to satisfy the soul. The problem of the Virgin Birth is one for settlement by faith rather than by argument; so is every birth. The certificate of a registrar is accepted as evidence, but it is not a proof that a boy is the son of the man whose name is on the scrap of paper. The proof lies in the heart of the mother, and faith is necessary for the assurance that she speaks the truth; if she speaks at all. Unless resemblance to the putative father is subsequently seen in the son, astonishment leads to incredulity in a base mind.

On the other hand, a likeness strengthens faith, and faith becomes assurance. In that direction lies the credibility of the Virgin Birth and the Divine Sonship of Jesus. His own declaration that He came is an indication that His life did not begin when He was born. His birth was the beginning of His life on earth in human form. He came in the likeness of men to exhibit the likeness of God for men to see God, and, by receiving His spirit through fellowship with Him, become partakers of the characteristics of the Divine Father.

All this makes us more curious about the childhood of Jesus. Speculation throbs with desire to penetrate the mystery enveloping the life in the carpenter's home, to lift the veil which is spread over the years that Jesus spent there before He began the tremendous task of saving the world. Apocryphal gospels, with well-intentioned purpose but unwise trespass on man's credulity, have shown Him as a youthful prodigy performing miracles for the benefit of His playmates. These stories are obviously fictitious. A more temperate desire and a stricter sense of reverence may entertain a discreet wish to learn something of the young life that grew into a greatness passing all understanding.

In every reverent mind there will be respect for the man who undertook the responsible office of natural guardian and protector of One Whom God gave for the redemption of mankind, and for His Virgin Mother, under whose tender care and solicitude the sensitive nature of the Child was nourished. Although all Christians may not agree to pay Divine honour to her, none will refuse to regard her as the ideal woman whom God chose for the highest duties that a mother has to perform.

Nazareth was an obscure village in Galilee until the Middle Ages. Nothing was heard of it from the days when Jesus lived there until it was mentioned by Eusebius in the fourth century as a village near Tabor. Epiphanius relates, about the same time, that before the reign of Constantine it was inhabited exclusively by Jews. It is situated on the slopes of the sides of a natural basin formed by an enclosure of hills in

the highlands of Galilee. In the highlands of the country stone is abundant and easily procured; the houses are therefore built of that material and raised on a foundation of rock, so close together that a man can easily jump from one housetop to another and readily escape impending danger.[1] In appearance they are neither remarkable for style nor architectural skill; all are erected on the same square plan, emanating from a mind devoid of the capacity for making anything different from the design of his forefathers. A man may even be his own architect. On a rock foundation four thick walls are raised to form one room, more rooms are added when more are required. Climatic considerations and the moderate needs of a simple life regulate their size, and it is on these reflections we are able to form an impression of ancient dwellings from the structures reared by the present inhabitants. Various references in the Bible assist us further in arriving at the conclusion that there is very little difference in either the external appearance or the internal arrangement of an Eastern home. A good foundation follows the choice of a site in the building operations of the people who live amongnst the hills where storm-clouds burst and the rain rushes in torrents over the rocks, and innumerable little streams tumble precipitately down the mountains. On the maritime plain along the coast, and in places where there is little stone, the houses of the poor are ill fitted to withstand the tempests of rain that at times deluge the country. Many of their homes, built of mud and raised on sand, are often swept away; even when this disaster does not occur the roofs, saturated with the wet, dry quickly and crack in the heat of the sun that follows the rain. The fissure then made gradually widens until the walls collapse; the house thus divided against itself cannot stand.[2] A house that is built of stone has sometimes a roof composed of branches of trees, on which earth is laid and beaten flat, where if occasion needs grass may be grown;[3] at other times it is made of the same substantial material as the walls that, rising slightly

[1] St. Matt. xxiv. 17. [2] St. Luke xi. 17. [3] Ps. cxxix. 6.

above the roof, form the battlements [4] for the safety of those who use the housetop.[5]

In a town the house of a rich man has, in addition to the apartments for habitation and use, a courtyard for a larger company than a cottage home could entertain. When he resolves to build he generally begins by digging a well in the courtyard, or in the solid rock over which the house will stand; a flat roof catches the rain, and channels and pipes convey it to the well.

One long, narrow street forms the main thoroughfare of a small Syrian town, rising and falling in a crooked and irregular fashion by the houses at the top or on the side of a hill; little crossways with pebbled stones, like the pavement of the main street, separate the various quarters of the inhabitants, frequently divided by factional interests.

If the structures, with their garish, red-tiled roofs, the churches and the minaret, could be removed from Nazareth, this prosperous town of Galilee might represent in style, if not in size, the village home of Jesus. Every little narrow street has a romantic and religious interest. One of the small shops reminds us of the Carpenter. Through the dim light furnished by the open door we can see a few tools, a small bench, and shavings on the floor. The sublime feature of the interest is absent, yet a radiance fills the place when we associate the humble workshop with the Christ of God.

The simple life of an Eastern village makes wealth almost superfluous for daily existence. Having no taste for art, the house of one man is similar to that of his neighbour; no perceptible difference appears between them except their size. This absence of elegance gives to the dwellings of the people a bare and unfurnished appearance; but what is lacking in the naked aspect of the village homes is supplied by the natural charm of their surroundings. No part of Palestine is so well favoured with a diversity of physical features as the district round the early home of Jesus. In the spring the gardens,

[4] Deut. xxii. 8.

[5] Acts x. 9; 2 Sam. xi. 2.

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And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them

Luke II: 51

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

They found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions

Luke II: 46

fresh and green, and the fields around them decked with the varied tints of many flowers, combine to furnish a delightful border for the grey stone dwellings. As the gardens do not belong to the poor, their life has apparently nothing in its environment to give a tone to the dreary monotony of their existence. Men do not seem to appreciate a general effect when they have no particular interest in it. The absence of means to make life more enjoyable is the sign of their poverty, rather than an inadequate supply of daily sustenance which is generally available in a village, so little being needed for the simple life of the people.

From the crests of the hills that rise above the town the prospect is delightful. On the north great Hermon rears its snow-capped head in the distance; nearer to the sight hill after hill rolls back to Nazareth. Looking towards the western horizon, the dim outlines of Carmel are seen abruptly terminated by the sea. Beyond the plain of Esdraelon, resting below the hills to the south of Nazareth, still farther south, rise the well-clothed summits of Samaria. By the eastern side of the plain, Gilboa, of fateful memory, stands before the southern hills; and a little to the east, nearer to Nazareth, appears the round top of Tabor. Between Tabor and Gilboa lie the historic fields where Barak led his men and Gideon tested his warriors.

In the bosom of these highland scenes, in an enchanted circle of physical beauty and famous events, the child Jesus grew into manhood in a household of boys and girls. Joseph soon disappears from the story, and a widow is left to rear a young family. Whatever may have been the relationship [6] of the various members is not of material interest. It is of little use disputing about the brethren of Jesus; He was the eldest,[7] and on Him rested the burden of helping the widow with a houseful of children until they were old enough to help themselves. His knowledge of domestic affairs continually appears

[6] St. Mark vi. 3.

[7] He was the Carpenter, the one that occupied the position of the head of the family.

in His sayings; they show that He had a living interest in all that concerned the needs of a village home. He knew the price of the simplest fare. He had a special love for children.

The human side of Jesus developed in the usual way. He was subject to the same law for growth as other children, and reached His manhood step by step in strength, in wisdom, and in grace. We cannot think that all His kindness and courage came to Him by a miracle when He began to teach, that when He dwelt in His Nazareth home He knew nothing of the triumps of patient endurance. Inside that home He grew in knowledge imparted to Him first by His mother; Joseph's instruction followed, until He went to the village school, where the Chazzan, the reader of the synagogue, was the Master. These primary institutions prepared youths for the higher schools and academies in charge of the Rabbis.[8]

While Jesus was never recognized in the eyes of the people as One Who had by scholastic attainment gained a title for learning, yet a natural aptitude in Him Who grew in wisdom found abundant opportunities for increasing His knowledge. The idea of His being a simple peasant with little or no education must be abandoned. Bilingual accomplishments are not uncommon amongst the better class of the peasants of the Holy Land accustomed to mix with Europeans, and Jesus in His Nazareth home must be placed in a higher category than even the most enterprising countrymen of the Palestine of today. His position as a Carpenter was superior to that of a tiller of the soil, and it is a mistake to regard Him as a peasant in the sense that we understand and apply the term with reference to Fellaheen.

Hellenic life and thought had long dominated the north; the Greek language was in common use and generally understood by the inhabitants of Galilee, who came into contact with their Gentile neighbours. On this account the northern province fell under the reproach of the more exclusive Jews of Judea.

[8] Josephus, *Ant.* xvi. 6, 2.

The language spoken by the common people was Aramaic (Syro-Chaldee), and Jesus used the same tongue in addressing them. "Talitha Cumi," "Abba," "Cephas," and "Eloi, Eloi, lama, Sabbachthani," are Aramaic words. A few Aramaic terms still survive in the dialects of the south. Hebrew was then, as now, known only to scholars and well-educated Jews. Jesus quoted directly from it, showing that He was acquainted with the original language of the Old Testament, and read it in the synagogue of Nazareth when He proclaimed His Advent as the Messiah; He knew also how to write.[9]

It is not possible to forget that the mother of Jesus was aware that He was destined to fill the supreme place in the nation, though we cannot even surmise how much of her expectation she bestowed on her Son, nor do we know the extent of her own knowledge. The influence of the Divine Spirit on a holy woman who sang the wondrous song we call the Magnificat leads us to conjecture that she knew more than is generally admitted. The gravity of her position would not always be concealed from the Boy. Her watchful eye, with its glint of eager anticipation, might excite His tender inquiry and by suggestion or promise, if not actual statement, increase the swelling tide within His growth, and carry Him onward in His acquisition of higher knowledge than the Teachers in the synagogue school possessed themselves.

One incident in the silent years affords us a little assistance in tracing the growth of the Child Jesus. The break in them is the account given by St. Luke of His first visit to the Temple in Jerusalem. A Jewish boy looks forward with hope to the time when he will assume the dignity of admission into the adult membership of the synagogue by becoming a "Son of the Law." It was the custom[10] of Joseph and Mary to go annually to Jerusalem to the Passover as devout Jews, and their regular pilgrimage would not be undertaken without an impression on the mind of Jesus. On His reaching the age of twelve years, when He became a "Son of the Law," He accompanied

[9] St. John viii. 8.

[10] St. Luke ii. 41.

them. The impressions already formed in the Boy from his mother's description of the Holy City would excite His expectations. It is scarcely possible to realize their extent and the eagerness He would feel in the anticipation of the visit. Jerusalem, to the Jews, is a word of wondrous power. In the days when the Temple of God, in its magnificence, attracted them no words can describe the glow of rapture in the Jewish heart for its love of the City of the Great King. The Holy City was the centre round which revolved all the patriotism of the Jewish race. It was instinct with the glory of Jewish history.

Though evidence of their subjugation to pagan Rome existed there, and a Roman amphitheatre had been built by Herod the Great, these marks of the oppressor's hold on the land and people served only to stir into flame the devotion of the Jews for the city of their fathers. Above all else the Temple of God, a glorious edifice, stood on the precipitous hill overlooking the Kedron Valley. Its lofty towers could be seen by the Galilean pilgrims as they descended the last slope to the shady avenues through the delightful gardens on the north of the city. When they came to Jerusalem by the road from Jericho, and gazed from the summit of the Mount of Olives on the magnificent scene before them, their admiration knew no bounds. Through the olive-trees and fig-trees the whole city spread beyond the gorge at the foot of the hill. Huge walls of massive stone rose above the deep valley; at the south-east corner, higher still, the majestic pinnacle of the Temple stood. Its riches glowed in the high gates plated with gold and silver. Great towers, and pillared courts paved with choice marbles, filled the foreground of a scene of incomparable beauty. Mansions in the gardens outside the northern wall, clustered homes within, palm-trees rising above the courtyards, and leafy bowers breaking the crests of white domes like foam on the deep sea waves, formed a picture on which no Jew could look without emotion. It was this view of it that, years after, brought the tears to the eyes of Jesus. What the city meant to Him

as a Boy when first He saw it none can tell, nor how much of that visit to the Passover was linked with His future life. It must have been of absorbing interest, for we read of His being left behind, tarrying in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions.[11]

Instead of His joining the company for their return journey, as Joseph and Mary expected, He was missing. They do not appear to have thought that anything unusual would happen. They reckoned on His joining the caravan for the north in the ordinary way, and this thoughtlessness on their part has led people to imagine that they were unconscious of any development in the Boy they had brought to Jerusalem in the customary manner of devout Jews. This, however, is an assumption that cannot be maintained. Their search for Him in various places before going to the Temple might bear that impression, but their attention being turned to the Holy Place would dissipate it. Little can be gained by the incident in its relation to Joseph and Mary. But there is something in it to help us in forming some conception of the consciousness of Jesus of His Messiahship, before He assumed the *rôle* of Teacher; some evidence is found in His words and bearing first in the Temple towards the doctors, and then in His address to His mother when she gently rebuked Him for His absence from their company. A time had arrived in His young life that comes to all who think seriously, when the ordinary duties of life are too restricted for their aspirations. High thoughts filled the Boy's soul; expanding prospects of life appeared before Him; large views of duty and His own destiny came into sight, afar off no doubt, but there in the distance within His knowledge lay His future work, the Father's business.[12] The earthly parental authority is being superseded by a Heavenly Father's claims. The narrow limits of childhood no longer

[11] St. Luke ii. 46.

[12] St. Luke ii. 49. Ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου may be either (1) "in My Father's House," or (2) "about My Father's business." The former is the patristic rendering, and the one now adopted by many commentators; but the latter is better known.

confine the spirit of youth; the barriers are past, and He moves onward with the current of His life set directly towards the Kingdom of the Infinite and Eternal God.

On His return to Nazareth from Jerusalem as a "Son of the Law," a recognized member of the community able to take His place with the adults in the synagogue service, a curtain immediately descends on His life. Until He emerges from the seclusion of the village to enter on His great work eighteen years after, nothing more is known about Him beyond the simple and natural statement of St. Luke, that He increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man.[13] The years from twelve to thirty represent a period in the life of a man of priceless value. During that time the soul awakens into life, the mind develops, opinions are formed, and convictions established. Whatever these mean to him they settle his future career, and probably his destiny. In the agricultural village of Nazareth life would be circumscribed by very narrow limits for an ordinary Jew. He would learn something of the world, mingle occasionally with its stream of profit, exchange the common gossip of the day with his neighbours, and visit his relations. His religious duties would keep him within the movements of the community, his business instincts take him to the adjacent towns, and his desire for pleasure to the Galilean lake. There is nothing in all these processes of human nature to account for the most perfect figure of all time, the One Who stands immeasurably superior to all mankind. He lived within twenty miles of the busy scenes of the northern towns, near the trade routes of the caravans from the Eastern lands to the Western Sea, yet not a single word in the Gospels explains how the silent years in Nazareth were spent; nothing is said by His contemporaries to indicate that He was known before He left His village home for His baptism in the river Jordan. There is no evidence of any rumour about an extraordinary Person residing in Nazareth. Nathaniel, who lived in a village very near to Him, had not heard

[13] St. Luke ii. 52.

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Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business

Luke II: 49

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris

Sc. D. Mastroianni

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man

Luke II: 52

of Him, and was slow to believe that any good could come out of a place with no reputation that was commendable.[14] The meagre references of the people in His village and district who did know something about Him show their astonishment at the remarkable powers He displayed.[15] His own family were surprised and not altogether pleased with the sensation He caused; it was something embarrassing to them for their relation to behave as their reference implied, when they suggested that He "was beside Himself";[16] it was a notoriety out of keeping with the reputation they were content to enjoy. They had evidently seen nothing in His life to indicate that these marvels were to be expected; for thirty years they had lived in the same house together without observing anything apparently unusual. This absence of knowledge may appear without reflection as if there had been nothing singular in the home-life of Jesus, and that He was therefore a very ordinary man; but it is a matter of daily observation that proximity is often prejudicial to personal knowledge. Habitual dwellers in a city know little about its special interests, and residents in scenes of rare beauty, so accustomed to them, are frequently least responsive to their attractions. This is particularly the case with Palestine today. Its people have to be taught by strangers about the features of interest, and a traveller in a week learns more about a town or a village than the inhabitants have learnt in all their lives. There is no recorded description of the personal appearance of Jesus, and though artists have portrayed Him for countless generations we cannot see His form with satisfaction: if we know Him at all it is through a vision of the soul.

We cannot imagine that the Evangelists were entirely without knowledge of the years He spent in the solitude of His youth and early manhood; natural curiosity, awakened by the power of One so famous and so beloved, would have caused them to inquire into the past. The absence of any record of it seems as intentional and deliberate as His silence respecting

[14] St. John i. 46. [15] St. Matt. xiii. 54–8. [16] St. Mark iii. 21.

His Godhead. He kept the secret of His Divine nature until His showing forth unto Israel. The three years of that wonderful vision of God and Man in Christ Jesus transcend all considerations for the time He spent in the obscurity of a Galilean village. But we, who never saw Him as He appeared before them, linger in thought on those uneventful years in the hope of finding something that will enable us to realize more fully the greatest figure of history, to comprehend more exactly the Being Who by His marvellous influence stirred the hearts of men to their utmost depths, and continues with increasing power to move the world.

He was called the Carpenter, and the carpenter of a village occupies a position that carries no great weight, attracts but little notice, creates no stir. His acquaintances are the inhabitants of his village who employ his skill, the people in the country round his home who become his customers, and the peasants in neighbouring villages too insignificant to support a carpenter. He earns a modest wage, enough to supply his simple needs and nothing more. He is poor, but it is an honest poverty that enables him to be free from the grinding care which enslaves and the inordinate ambition that strives; and in his freedom he moves about with ease amongst the people, sharing their interests without the restraint of inferiority, or the arrogance of the pride of place; hearing their tales and helping them to bear their burdens. His position is higher than the common tillers of the soil, but not high enough to excite the envy of his neighbours or the jealousy of his friends. In this lowly and honourable sphere the Christ worked as a Man among men. The conspicuous feature of His life in those quiet days is the lesson it imparts, by His example, that character is the supreme test of success. We see it in His teaching in the work of His Great Vocation. He shows us that it is not in the acquisition of wealth, in the attainment of social distinction, in something outside a man, but in the development of the life within him. If nature be satisfied, he is free to grow in the excellences of mind and heart, to cultivate the

intelligent aspiration of the soul, and rise to those heights of spiritual power that make the real man. He is not free from the influences of his environment without it; in its strength and by its force he controls them, accepting what is good in the circumstances of his life, and rejecting all that is evil.

In the days when Christ dwelt in Nazareth, His home was near the busy scenes of commercial enterprise and haunts of pleasure. The road that passed by His village was often thronged with passengers engaged in trade, travellers who visited the cities of the Greeks, soldiers of Imperial Rome, and the courtiers of the King. Life was more full of rumour in those days than it is in the land today; the customs of the time made it less real; the sensuous pleasures of Hellenic life had lowered its standard. It was not easy to live above the mean and hollow pretence that flaunted its attractions when Jesus lived in Nazareth. He must have heard the common scandal of the country-side, the vicious stories of the city life by the lake, and the tales of a corrupt court; yet He lived in this atmosphere of evil without hurt to His fair soul. He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. So true had His life been before the world of His village and His country that no one could answer when He said, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" [17] We may in imagination watch the movements of the Perfect Man as He walked from His workshop, or tramped the dusty road, a picture of infinite grace, His long flowing robes drifting in the breeze that fanned His cheek, with His clear eyes gazing on the little things around Him—small to others, but not to Him. A sinless soul in communion with nature grasps more of the inner meanings of things than the one tainted with the imperfections of his time. He was the perfection of human life in all its aspects, and the quality of a life attracts to itself all that is similar. In physical appearance, mental vigour, and spiritual nature He was the perfect unveiling of ideal manhood. The perfection of human nature was not the only part of Jesus of Naz-

[17] St. John viii. 46.

areth. His existence was due to the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit Whose movements are quite beyond the compass of the human mind, and cannot therefore be defined by man. The Spirit, like the wind, bloweth where He listeth.[18] Every breath of the Divine Spirit is like a seed, a germ of the higher life depending on the receptivity of the soil, the disposition and the heart of the natural man. When that is perfect, every relation of the body to the mind, all the actions of the being, are balanced by the Spiritual Power that created them, and it is the secret operation of the Holy Ghost within the soul of man which by the gift of some clearer light, of some greater strength than nature can supply, carries it luminously and impetuously onward towards truth and goodness. A man must be reckoned not so much by what he is as the sum of the forces that are acting upon him. In addition to the store of a man's visible equipment in himself and his environment, we must take into account the spiritual system to which he belongs, and estimate what he may do or become under the force communicated by its mysterious power.[19] It sweeps along the unseen domain of energy that lies underneath humanity, and to comprehend it means the realization of the fundamental element of life.

There is a natural devoutness in some people, while others seem impervious to all that is good. A man's spiritual life lies open to his surroundings as well as himself, and while we may admit that man's destiny is, to a certain extent, shaped for him before his birth, it does not rid the individual of his moral responsibility. Neither the training that Jesus received from a holy mother nor the advantages of His birth were sufficient to equip Him for the future without the continual direction and support of the Holy Spirit. His physical growth was the outcome of His submission to the Divine will; the subjection to His parents was His answer to that will within Him.

Both in His physical and His spiritual development He had to encounter all the trials and obstacles that were met by the

[18] St. John iii. 8. [19] J. Brierley, *Ourselves and the Universe*, p. 136.

men of His time, He was confronted by all the difficulties of His position, and they were infinitely greater because His sinless life would be fretted by the sorrow that inevitably follows the contact with evil. The clear vision of the good and great in nature increased His joy in life, but He was equally free to discern the base and the mean by which He was surrounded. When a scene of loveliness or horror is placed before a person the heart is immediately affected; it feels at once attraction or repulsion, and acts upon the feeling; and that action creates a further movement that reflects upon it for good or ill. The beauty of holiness or the loathsomeness of sin is more noticeable to a holy man than to one whose spiritual light is dim. Everything unholy must have been a sore test to the pure soul of the Christ, and the sorrows that swept over it marred the perfect serenity of His face. The absolute purity which He maintained by the patience of His suffering amongst His fellow-men, the infinite tenderness which He exhibited, the magnificent courage which He displayed, the marvellous intuition which He employed, form a catalogue of gifts that would be incredible in an ordinary man of His time in a Galilean village. From its shadows He appears in a form that commands the attention of the multitude, in a life that demands the consideration of mankind, to a death so sublime that it has become the greatest example of sacrifice the world has ever seen. He alone of all the sons of men has made a perfect environment for all time in the fellowship He has established for men with the Divine Author of their being, so that they may by the Holy Spirit enter into the fulness of that stature of the Perfect Man, and through Him obtain eternal life.

CHAPTER III

THE FORERUNNER OF THE CHRIST

"Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, . . . the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness."[1] As the reign of Tiberius began in A.D. 11,[2] we have a fixed date for the commencement of John's ministry, viz. A.D. 26. It was brief, stormy and tragic, but it fulfilled the object of his mission and the prophecy at his birth.[3] Both the man and his worth are described by our Lord in very remarkable words.[4] He declared that John was a prophet, "and more than a prophet, for this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."

He was the son of a priest, born out of due time,[5] dedicated in his infancy for the performance of a great work. When this son of Zacharias was promised his destiny was marked by the prophetic utterance, "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord. . . . And many of the Children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God." "And the hand of the Lord was with him."[6] The circumstances of his birth indicated the place he was to occupy in his manhood; that place was God's appointment, and all the supernatural incidents of his birth were signs of the future greatness which God had planned for him. This was the important factor in it, not so much the tokens of a miraculous origin, as the presence of

[1] St. Luke iii. 1, 2.

[2] Suetonius and other historians reckon the years of Tiberius from the time he commenced to reign with Augustus, when he became *collega imperii*.

[3] St. Luke i. 15.

[4] St. Matt. xi. 7–12.

[5] St. Luke i. 7.

[6] St. Luke i. 15, 16, 66.

God over all — the parents, the home, and the child. His gift to the aged priest and his wife of a son, the ordering of his name and directing of his life, were all in God's scheme for the herald to proclaim the advent of the Kingdom, and prepare the way for the King.

The parents of John were devout people; "they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless," [7] and He selected these parents, and their home, for the Messenger, as He chose the home for the King. The sublime Song of Zacharias shows a consciousness of the Divine presence and a realization of His promise, which rise above the stage of merely human composition. There is in it an approach to the Kingdom of Christ, the beginning of His manifestation; and the aged priest stands at the dawn of the brightness of earth's most glorious day.

Into this home of spiritual fervour God's gift was planted to grow into the fulfilment of the promise and the attainment of the place of honour which our Lord declared were his due. Like others who left the company of their fellow-men in sorrow for the corrupt age in which they lived, and retired to the hills overlooking Jordan Valley and the wild region on the east and west of the Dead Sea, to dwell in the solitude of that desert place, he sought there a more perfect knowledge of the will of God. In the mysterious silence of the years he spent in the seclusion of the wilderness, alone in the darkness that gathered round him in the caves of the mountains bordering the Jordan Valley, and in the jungle by the swelling flood of the river, he learnt more of the reality of life and death than the men of the cities and towns of Israel. Subsisting on the meagre supply of life which nature gave him — dried locusts and wild honey — he lived within sight of the luxury of an effete age.

In the reign of Herod the Great the city of Jericho had attained a position of political and economic importance, and

7 St. Luke i. 6.

its voluptuous life continued when his son Archelaus reigned in his stead. Its rich lands were farmed by the Romans; the revenue from them was collected by the Publicans. Glimpses of the life of the city, the beauty and extent of its groves and gardens, and the splendour of its palaces and places of entertainment, are afforded us by various writers, Josephus being the most informing. What he tells us is suggestive of scenes of Oriental luxury which herald the decay of a nation. Miles of palm-groves and balsam fields and gardens spread over the fertile ground watered by streams flowing at random from its fountains; gleaming pools formed by the owners of stately mansions from the brook that ran down the fissure in the Judean hills ministered to the people's comfort; while a hippodrome and amphitheatre offered them exciting pleasures. Jericho became the resort of the idle rich and indigent poor. Crowds of all sorts and conditions of men gathered in the bazaars and places of amusement, and the people revelled in the abandonment of sensual delights. As a protest against the licentious indulgence in the city, men turned to the wilderness on its borders, to the mountains above the plain, and the desert on the fringe of its fertile lands.

It is when men are most alone and at their highest and best that the sense of communion with God becomes clear and strong. For religious men this has ever been the one great token of eternity. It is an experience that gives them a more profound sense of reality than they have ever known. John was such a man. He had felt the glory of the true life of God shining into his soul; to him heaven and eternity were as real as the air he breathed; and he saw that life on earth was swiftly passing, while the people looked upon it as a show or a dream; that the men of his time had lost the consciousness of God; that they could no longer distinguish the voice of the Eternal from "the shrill loudness of the fleeting day." They had so long been associated with all that was formal and unreal, which made life so small and mean, that contact with evil had no terrors for them. The poor consolation of their ceremonial

observances, to which they clung with loyalty and devotion, brought neither satisfaction nor peace, although it drew them more readily into the current of Messianic hope, which had been intensified in the hearts of the more fervent patriots by the condition of the world around them. Their expectations developed according to their desires; the more eager amongst them looked for the Coming One in the form which favoured their idea of the Kingdom. The Zealots wished for a King of might who would overthrow their enemies and create a ruling State whose bounds would reach the utmost limits of Roman dominion; the Sadducees longed for display; the Pharisees hoped for a kingdom that would institute the predominance of their rule and a stricter observance of law and ritual; the Essenes, a body of ascetic men sick at heart with the luxury and frivolity of the time, wanted one stripped of all ostentation, simple yet stern, like their own way of life for man; others were prepared to welcome any change from the extortionate practices of Roman governors. Everybody looked for outward form, the coming of a greatness requiring no effort of their own. Few indeed saw the need of a change in themselves; it was always for something without, instead of something within. Yet the kind of spirit in man is the determining factor of his destiny.

Suddenly there appeared the man with the message for the time; his pulpit the sand-dunes by the river near the Dead Sea shore. A more appropriate place could not have been found for it than the region connected with guilty Sodom, the desolate land where the sweltering heat of summer turns men to madness, and presents a vivid picture of the wrath to come. Here the weird, wild figure stood with the atmosphere of the desert around him, clothed in its rough garment. The coarse robe, the flowing locks, the piercing eye, the stern speech of the holy man took the world by storm; attracted by his preaching, multitudes flocked to hear him. From the uplands of Judah, the smiling fields of Galilee, and the cities and towns of the country a stream of pilgrims journeyed to the plain between the hills and the

river, where the Messenger of the Kingdom was preparing the way for the King. There was a greatness in him, a grandeur in his mission, which compelled men to listen; there was in him an irresistible force which even now is felt by those who stand before his personality and read the scanty words he addressed to the crowd in the wilderness. He came to serve a cause and not to take possession of it; to the servant only, and after service to pass away for the Master to assume the place appointed for Him. This is one of the ways in which John's greatness is pre-eminent, and thus his preaching serves for all time to prepare all men by repentance for the Kingdom of the Christ.

The consternation caused by his strong and forcible language was accentuated by his strange aspect; something extraordinary was necessary as a vehicle for the burning words which stirred the consciences of the people, and wrung their hearts. He had lived before God, the familiarity of His presence made him true, and he spoke as men speak when they are in earnest, when the issues of life and death shorn of all pretence lie naked before them. So John was real; it was his vision of the realities of things which produced the movement amongst the people. Under the spell of his glowing words, empowered by the Spirit of God, they began to see the necessity for a change. He had awakened in them a real uneasiness, a genuine anxiety; he made them feel there was something about them which ought to be removed. He told them all to repent, since without repentance there is neither an adequate sense of need nor a disposition to resort to a new life. Repentance suggests the apprehension of sin as a fact, a personal fact, as a distinct violation of a holy law, and as such involving a penalty. And, as this conviction of sin must be followed by a resolution to forsake it, he told them to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, to reform! He brought them to confession of their sin and to be baptized in order that they might see by a symbol how the past could be washed away and the new life begun.

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

There cometh one mightier than I after me

Mark I: 7

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him

John I: 32

The dust and heat of the East affect the people with a sore burden, which is not merely the cause of discomfort, but disease; and the social amenities of life respond to natural demands for its removal. The washing of water, for taking it away and bringing relief and refreshment, is a well-known custom of the people. The washing of Baptism symbolized their cleansing from the accumulated sins of the past which they had confessed; their immersion being the acknowledgment of the desire for the removal of a moral defilement. When they plunged under the water for a moment and emerged from the clear element, as it streamed off their bodies carrying with it every earthly stain, they were helped to understand the removal of their sins, and the experience of refreshment derived from their bathing gave them the hope of a new clean life.

Baptism had been prescribed for the admission of Gentiles into full participation in the privileges of Israel,[8] but never before had it been proposed that Israel should undergo a baptism of repentance. The rite, therefore, acquired a new significance; it became a real answer to John's call, and the first step towards the new Kingdom. After baptism the penitents stood on its threshold, where a stronger element, an influence more thorough and more penetrating, awaited them, which John had promised. Here John pointed to the difference between his own mission and the work of Christ. John's baptism was preparatory, by water; there was to follow a Divine baptism,[9] one with the Holy Ghost and with fire; a living flame which gave the new life, by a greater than John. In the baptism of repentance something was to be removed; in the baptism by fire something was to be received. There was still another difference: although John might prepare, he could not produce; that part of his work, the true inwardness of the preparation, was beyond his power. The outer form he could administer; the change within he could not determine. He was

[8] Edersheim, *Life and Times of the Messiah,* vol. i. p. 273.
[9] St. Matt. iii. 11.

able to perceive, he could recognize the sincerity of the confession of those whom he baptized; he saw their need of the better life, but he could not give it. Through Christ alone, by the purification and sanctification of the spirit, entrance was to be made into the new Kingdom, and He only would decide who belonged to it, and, finally, separate in the last great harvest the corn from the chaff in the winnowing process of His judgment,[10] when the corn will be garnered and the chaff burned with fire.

The Jews had always believed, as children of Abraham, that they were already citizens of the Kingdom of God; the substance of the Old Testament contained their relationship to it, and the meaning of all their ordinances and institutions was based upon it. Some inner commotion of their minds regarding their position and the new Baptism must have been apparent to John when he said with emphatic warning, "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." They were informed that their proud pretensions could no longer be justified; "spiritual dignity rests not upon spiritual descent, but upon spiritual character." He added further, as a sign of the coming of the Kingdom and the provision for ascertaining the suitability of those who entered it, "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree, therefore, which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?"[11]

To all who approached him with this question he showed the necessary way of reformation. He had raised a ferment in their hearts, and he pointed out the only way in which it could be settled for them to enjoy the privileges of the Kingdom: not because of their being the children of a favoured nation, but by a sincere desire to enter into a new and better life. When he saw the Pharisees he said, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"[12] From John's question we naturally assume they

[10] St. Luke iii. 17. [11] St. Luke iii. 9, 10. [12] St. Matt. iii. 7.

were unexpected, or their motives for being present were disguised. The allusion to vipers is expressed with some bitterness, as they are, amongst a large number of reptiles in the country, the only dangerous variety, and in the sun-stricken desert where John had made his home he had doubtless seen them fleeing when the scrub had been burnt and their places of abode became too hot for comfort. Evidently something had moved the Pharisees and Sadducees from the exalted position of their own estimation, and shaken their feeling of satisfaction with it. They may have felt that the people might be turned from their former leaders to follow the new prophet, and their own place in the public regard would be lost. Although the Pharisees and Sadducees are associated in our minds with terms of reprobation, they had won the respect of the nation by their concern for the law, and their patriotism, and like all who love the esteem of others, and work for more of it, they feared its loss. They may also have been attracted by a more worthy motive. Whatever it may have been, the same urgency for a change was for them also. All their observances were useless as preparation for the Kingdom; their meticulous care for the law was of no avail. Their form was without life, the spirit of it had departed, the husk alone remained.

The Baptism of Jesus

From the silence of eighteen years in Nazareth Jesus emerged, and He appeared before John the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan. Although they were related in the flesh there was no human recognition. The life in Nazareth of his Kinsman had been severed from the wilderness life of John. The two had grown apart, each in his own sphere moving upward to a higher plane than ordinary human thought. One soared higher than the other; so lofty had His thought world been to Him that, when He presented Himself for baptism, John was astonished; a new standard of life came into sight, another Man stood before him, differing altogether from the

men he had examined for baptism. Here was no timid, shrinking suppliant, seeking a new and better way of life; no disturbing element stirred the placid nature of the new candidate. His sinless soul, His perfect life, as He approached the Baptist, fascinated the prophet. He knew Him not as the Messiah, but he was aware that the One before him was unlike the rest of men. As he surveyed the serene figure something in the solemn majesty of His bearing filled John with reverence and awe, and he, the preacher of repentance, irresistibly felt the need of the Stranger's work for himself. He realized his own unworthiness, and the wild Prophet of the Wilderness acknowledged in humble submission, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest Thou to me?" [13]

John's message to the sinful multitude had been a call for a change in their hearts as he saw their serious condition; now he sees something in Jesus which assures him of the stainless life, hence his endeavour to dissuade Him from baptism. There was nothing in Him to wash away; baptism seemed unnecessary and inappropriate; but Jesus had subjected Himself to all forms of human jurisdiction and eternal righteousness. He was circumcised according to law as instituted in the early history of the nation; He was obedient to the law for life and conduct as represented by the Mosaic dispensation, and every one of its commandments He had kept in strict obedience.[14]

According to Mosaic law those who came in contact with any one ceremonially unclean were required to submit to the appointed ablution. Hence the willingness of Jesus to be baptized to fulfil all righteousness; having been in touch with men He recognized John's baptism as a symbol of purification. In God's sight He was clean, but through His connection with unclean people baptism was necessary. He submitted to the teachings of the Prophets and valued their precepts, as well as the law, as regulations of life. Baptism signified a new departure; it was the witness of the change from the obscurity of His native village to His public work. Repentance means

[13] St. Matt. iii. 14. [14] Lev. xi.

a change of life, and Baptism represents it. He was stepping out of the silence of the past into the din and strife of the future, and a formal recognition of this movement was inevitable. Baptism was, therefore, the symbolic rite of attestation. It does not create a fact, but attests it; and the fact in Christ's baptism was the acknowledgment of His entry on a public career involving a great purpose, the beginning of a new epoch in His life before men, in which He represented the Kingdom of God; not an inward change in Himself, but a manifestation of the outward form of admission into His Kingdom and the way appointed. For John, who knew more than other men of the work He came to perform, it was even more; it was a positive revelation of His consecration as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world; and when He descended with the Baptist into the waters of the Jordan the awful sign from Heaven appeared, and the Voice of God testified that Jesus was His Son.[15]

[15] St. Matt. iii. 17; St. John i. 34.

CHAPTER IV

THE TEMPTATION

The more highly organized the being, the more perfect his character, and the greater is his capacity for pain—or pleasure. It is this factor in the life of Jesus, the perfection of His nature, which introduces an element of mystery into the magnitude of His trial. We cannot comprehend it, we can only expect partially to understand its meaning; but even the part which is intelligible is sufficient to show us that the supreme value of life hung on the issue of His contest with Satan. He alone must have told His disciples the circumstances of His conflict, and His narrative would have some bearing on His work, besides the moral result of the fierce struggle in which he was engaged. In both these aspects it is important for us to notice the sense of responsibility He attached to its effect on mankind. His severe trial has a twofold application: on the one hand He entered into it in His incarnate state; on the other as the representative man. He is presented to us as the Second Adam, and, like the first Adam, was tempted, but in circumstances more unfavourable. In the first Adam there was the ability to resist evil, and he failed to exercise it; the Second Adam was capable of resisting evil and proved it, not because He was insusceptible, but strong. The first fell through disobedience to the will of God; the Second conquered by His obedience, and He found in the will of God the necessary power to overcome. The first man was tempted amidst circumstances calculated to satisfy all the legitimate needs of man; the second man in a place where there were no visible means of support.

Between these two states there is every conceivable situation, every one being less hard than the one accepted by the Son of Man; and this is our encouragement, for no man will

ever be tempted beyond his power of endurance; if he fails his fall will be due to self-reliance, when his strength might have been reinforced by the same power which enabled Christ to achieve His victory, and through the same means at His disposal, when He submitted to the will of God. His submission was not servitude, but loyalty to truth and duty. It meant the closing of self to the world of things around Him, and the opening of it for God to reveal Himself, and the world of the unseen in which His will holds sway.[1] The light of truth must come down from a higher plane than human experience, to enrich it by a more perfect understanding of the will of God. Surrender to the will of God implies the recognition of His sovereign power, and the desire to become possessed of its aid for the strengthening of the human spirit by a vital union with the Divine. Christ, as the Divine Son, came to do the will of God, that the Father might carry out His Divine purpose through the filial obedience of the Son.

In His central thoughts of God and man and destiny, He broke through every barrier of the ages, and in the visions He had seen lay the whole power of His temptation. It is along the lines of all that a man has hoped for that his bitterest temptations appear. They are always subtly interwoven with the past, striking deep into the roots of his personality.[2] This fact of life, of human experience, reveals to us the course of development of Jesus into the full consciousness of His office, now visibly acknowledged by the Father; and the significance of His temptation may be recognized by its position at the commencement of His Messianic work. He walked deliberately from the river to the stern, barren, and inhospitable wilderness, to prepare for the work of His life. We cannot see the glory of it unless we observe carefully all He set aside.[3] Into the loneliness of the hills He passed, pondering over the future, the grave future immediately before Him. Absorbed in these thoughts, He sought the most appropriate place for medita-

[1] John Smith, *The Magnetism of Christ*, p. 19.
[2] *The Return of the Angels*, by G. H. Morrison, p. 28.
[3] Phil. ii. 5–8.

tion, where nothing could disturb His reflections, the wild and sterile heights and dark ravines that bound the Jordan Plain, the outlaw's refuge and the bandit's home. The only sounds to break the profound silence of this desolate region came from the creatures of the wild, the distant whirr of insect life borne on the early morning air from the plain, and the dismal wail of the jackal and harsh scream of the hyena in the night.[4] All served to form a suitable accompaniment to His thoughts as He realized what was meant by the work for the Kingdom of God.

The world in all its forms, its human woe, its mortal pain, its terrible sin, with His own interest in it, became more real as the bitter pains He must endure and the shame of the cross grew into shape before Him. With this vision of the future, of the work He had to perform, of the Kingdom He came to establish, He was held fast. No mind could ever have seen so clearly the will of God through the fume and fret of human life, nor any heart have throbbed with a love so strong as His — a love which faults, desertion, and denial never quenched, a tenderness which nothing could destroy. His work was all for love; the love of God for man. He was standing on the threshold of His enterprise, accepting the responsibility, and shaping the destiny of men. It was the way in which He looked at it that engaged His attention; His spiritual elevation enabled Him to view the whole scene of His future labour with a comprehensive idea of its vast issues. While thus occupied with the vision of the life before Him and problem of His work, He was tempted of the devil, and the whole of His life and work were involved in His threefold temptation. It was not merely the main entrance to His great purpose, its vestibule; His temptation was the contest for the position He had assumed. In its essence it was spiritual; in its nature real and actual. The three forms of it are associated with one idea represented by two opposing forces, one in accord with the will of God operating by faith as a process in the heart of man;

[4] St. Mark i. 13.

the other a secular ideal desired by the nation in harmony with the spirit of the age. On the side of the expectations of the people was the Power of Evil.

Our Lord was not unacquainted with the spirit of the age. He had seen it expressed in the life of His native village, and He knew that in every man there is something which may be higher than his own time if he has strength to raise it; that no one need be utterly subject to the spirit of the age.[5] Variations are being constantly produced, and they are found in men and not in the things about them, except in so far as the men themselves have altered them. And this process displays a valuable trait in a man's character, a potentiality, in proportion as he is different from the expression of his time. Social pressure works against it to stifle its growth, and when it is for man's welfare the spirit that is opposed to good increases the weight to bear it down; but he who can withstand the forces arrayed against him, and rise above them, will survive, and become the leader of the age that is to follow. Christ knew all this; He knew that He had in the course of His development reached the supreme crisis of His life, and He must decide for all men and for all time how He shall act for them. He knew that He could satisfy the people by co-operating with the spirit of the age, and promote the Kingdom for which the Jews looked with eager hope. And the devil tempted Him. He knew, too, the better way, the path of duty which is always the more difficult, submission to the will of God for His direction; and along this road He resolved to travel where all the forces of the world and its evil were arrayed against Him. The severity of His conflict can only be measured by the pre-eminent position He has gained in the heart of mankind. He has proved to be the mightiest influence for good the world has ever known, and He is acknowledged, even by those who do not follow in His steps, to be the Leader of the highest and best of men. He stands alone in His elevation, but His Spirit is in touch with men, drawing them to Him in order

[5] E. W. Waterhouse, *The Psychology of the Christian Life*, p. 83.

that they may also find in Him the power to overcome, and in His strength to rise above the spirit of the age in which they live.

The actual order of the three Temptations is a matter of conjecture, as St. Matthew and St. Luke have not the same arrangement. It is not merely this difference which has been called in question; their order has no particular importance; it is the character of the trials through which our Lord passed about which men dispute. If the narrative on which we rely for information is naturally interpreted there is no doubt that the facts it represents are objective events, and not simply subjective conditions. There is no dissimilarity in them to the practical side of our Lord's work and teaching, where a correspondence is found between an outward form and an inward truth. Betwixt the outward event and the inward feeling the boundary is thin and shadowy; none can tell where one begins and the other ends, and we might easily conceive that at the time of the conflict the substantial nature of the temptation excluded for the moment all outward appearances. A reasonable view of the temptations will neither refuse to accept the incidents as true nor expect absolute literal accuracy of detail. Even the necessary movements for the events may be understood without recourse to the idea of celestial marvels, the miraculous transportation of Christ from one place to another. All the circumstances were within the realm of probability. The positions were accessible, and there is a mountain with the remains of a crusading castle upon it (Kelat er Rubad), since used by Saracen foemen, now decayed and partially ruined, from whence all parts of Palestine may be seen, and its borders also. From such a point of vantage it is not difficult to believe in the vast survey of earth's wide dominions, when we remember the central position of the country, its narrow limits and the proximity of all the Kingdoms of the earth in the days of Christ's temptation.

While the Divine Spirit in our Lord remained strong, and He was engrossed with the subject of His meditation, the pressure

of the ordinary needs of the body was borne heavily upon Him; He was truly man, and He hungered. His frame was spent with the tide of feeling that had passed over Him and the strain of a rigorous fast, during which His agitated mind had defined His course of action.

Three times was He attacked in His uttermost human need, and each time by a different avenue. The first temptation came through the body by that subtle influence which suggests the fulfilment of the natural need of man by a legitimate use of His power to provide for Himself. Scattered around Him were stones in plenty, so like the loaves He had seen at home they might easily have been changed to satisfy His hunger; and the suggestion that He should turn them into bread because He had the power to do it was His temptation. In the midst of the whirling thought that He could appease the gnawing pain within Him came another thought gently stealing over His soul — that, though He was the Son of God, He was also Man, into whose dependent condition He had voluntarily entered, within which it was necessary He should be confined; and the thought of God's preserving care, of His will that man should trust Him, formed the resolve to endure, and He bravely bore the pangs of hunger in the consciousness of God's ability to sustain Him. He had to prove at the outset of His public life, prove it to Himself and to others, that He came not to alter or to ease the hard circumstances of the world for Himself and for man, but to overcome them; not to satisfy only the need of the body, but to show there may be something more in man, greater than his carnal nature. The appetites, impulses, and necessities of the body are the least essential of man's needs, but the most urgent; man's mind and heart and soul and spirit, these also must live and grow, for they contain the life in man that gives to existence its supreme value. To lose this spiritual capacity is to lose everything worth having, and to gain immediate satisfaction for the body would be poor compensation for the loss of all that gives a man the right to call himself a man.

The Man Christ Jesus, restricting Himself within the common laws of human life, had no ordinary means of appeasing His hunger. He could command the stones to be made bread, and Satan tempted him to supply His needs in this extraordinary way by His supernatural power; but in so doing He would have left the sphere of human nature, and His life would have been no human life. The great purpose of God that a pure and holy life should be lived in human conditions, according to His word and by His will, would have been foiled a second time. But Christ refused to use His Divine power to gratify His human nature in circumstances where lawful means were denied, and in rejecting the tempter's suggestion He declared it was God's will that "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," and showed that His word included two notions, one of revelation and one of commandment, truth and duty; that life is for truth and duty, and not for comfort. Things of sense appeal to men in attractive forms, bodily needs make an emphatic call on mortal nature, and the answer must be given in accordance with the word of God that reveals His will, by which the life of man maintains its even balance. Without this knowledge there cannot be a high sense of duty, because there is no duty which has not its corresponding ruth. The absence of the knowledge of truth is, therefore, a serious impediment to the performance of duty. The man who believes the word of God controls his desires and regulates them by the will of God, trusts Him under restraints and privations, and waits for Him to give the means and to indicate the time for their satisfaction.

In His temptation and His triumph Jesus was the true man who came to prove that though the world has its wilderness where men fail and fall, and faint and bleed, yet even in these hard and lonely places life can best be lived by faith in God's revealed word, and in obedience to His commandments. "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

There is a singular appropriateness in the use of these words from the book of Deuteronomy,[6] and the example set by Christ. Israel, redeemed from the bondage of Egypt, were fed by the hand of God, in order that they might live in communion with the Giver of their daily food, and think more of the Giver than the gift. The manna in the waste places of rocks and sand, where nothing could be grown, was substantial evidence of Divine providence, of an Almighty Father Who recognized their need and supplied it. Life ought to have been simple and direct with the principle of faith so plainly manifest in their existence, but they grew weary, having thought only of the food they received, forgetting its Provider; and the answer to their complaining came in the words our Lord used to the tempter. He showed by His example that man's support was not in the gift but the Giver; and the Giver is greater than the gift. His life was perfectly simple because it was a life of perfect principle. He came to do God's will, to manifest it to men who knew it not, who could not by themselves fulfil it; such was the work He came to perform. And throughout His brief ministry, by precept and practice, He continued to make it plain. As He sat on the stone of Jacob's well on a subsequent journey through Samaria, His disciples pressed Him to eat when He was busy with the work of the Kingdom, and He answered them in the words: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me."[7] After teaching the people many of His wondrous lessons, He saw with grief they had been misunderstood, and the multitude followed Him because they "did eat of the loaves and were filled."[8] He knew man's carnal nature, and though He fed the hungry out of His deep compassion, He never used His power to support Himself. He simply acted according to the will of God and taught others also to seek first admission into the Kingdom, the knowledge of the right way of life, and told them that all things necessary for the body would be added unto them. He came to deny self, to put self down and set God up, for self to be of no ac-

[6] Deut. viii. 3. [7] St. John iv. 34. [8] St. John vi. 26.

count that God might be all in all, and His will the rule of life in the heart of man, and He called men to follow Him into the Kingdom by the same faith. He defined the condition of the citizenship as the state of entire dependence upon God and absolute submission to His will. He indicated the character [9] of the citizen, as far as this life is concerned, in the happy trustfulness of children in their complete reliance on the Father. He pointed to the lilies of the field to show God's providence,[10] to the numbered hairs of the head to exhibit His knowledge,[11] and to the pitiful tragedy of a fallen sparrow to convince the people of His care.[12]

The second temptation had, in addition to the personal element respecting the Sonship of the Messiah, a national side to its character, and a new situation was found for the tempter's design; the scene was changed from the lone wilderness to the centre of Jewish life. Having failed in his efforts to tempt Jesus to use His supernatural power for His support, he tried to induce Him to seek a supernatural sign of His Father's love, and justify His faith in His providential care. From the dizzy height of the pinnacle on which He stood, with Satan beside Him, Christ could look on the crowd in the Temple courts below, assembled for the daily sacrifice, hopelessly waiting for the time when the prestige of their nation would be restored and a Deliverer appear to overthrow the hated yoke of heathen Rome, ready to accept the literal interpretation of the prophet Malachi, "The Lord Whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His Holy Temple," if a celestial marvel furnished a visible manifestation of His advent. And the devil, with sinister purpose, suggested to Christ that He should test His Sonship by a miraculous act of God to assure Him of His Father's care, which, at the same time, by an ostentatious display of His providence, would encourage the false notions of the people who were looking for a supernatural token of the Messiah. Satan's insidious proposal was based on a warrant

[9] St. Matt. xviii. 3.
[10] St. Luke xii. 27.
[11] St. Luke xii. 7.
[12] St. Luke xii. 6.

of Scripture craftily perverted from its real meaning for his own nefarious plan. It concealed his ulterior motive in the obvious intention to test the faith of the Son in the love of the Father. He quoted a very precious promise, "He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up," and said, "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down." [12] After the firm trust Christ had exhibited in the will of God to sustain Him in the wilderness, the temptation to rely on another form of support seemed but a further demonstration of the same faith; a specious method of reasoning more suitable for the vacillating mind of a person whose relationship to God was not assured. The right place before Him is often hard to determine; men are disposed either to doubt altogether or venture too much; the true position is known only to those who really love Him. They are satisfied with their place, even if it be the entrance to a path of peril, and there they trust Him at the call of duty; but to go when there is no call of duty is presumption, and in it there is an element of uncertainty, no clear sight of God's will, and therefore no real faith. It is an interference with the Divine prerogative arising from spiritual pride, that demands a special act of providence for its gratification, and witnesses to view the situation its vanity desires.

The devil can only use the natural laws of the human mind for his purpose as we use them for our own, but he is quick to seize an opportunity when it occurs and make the best of it. He knows when immediate interests have obscured the light of faith within, and takes advantage of its struggles for existence to suggest a stimulant for increasing its vitality, and many a foolish and hazardous enterprise is undertaken with disastrous consequences which might have been avoided by legitimate means; and they affect others besides those directly concerned.

God can furnish occasions when they are required and enable us to use them, but only with adequate motives, and for wise

[12] St. Matt. iv. 6.

ends. Startling evidence is never offered when His ways are plain.

Satan's cunning device to overthrow God's purpose for Israel by tempting His Son did not succeed; his proposal was instantly rejected. The idea of presuming on God's goodness, when it was sufficiently well known to Him, was utterly repugnant to the wholesome mind of Jesus. An intelligent understanding of God's word and His will is a spiritual rather than an intellectual process, and depends on relationship; the Son knows the Father's will because He is the Son, and nothing can destroy the confidence of love. There is no need to test it by a special revelation of the Father's care, and Christ was too loyal a Son to wish for a vulgar display of it for those whose hearts were too cold to respond to its radiant truth. If by a miracle He had been saved from destruction after following the advice of the tempter, neither priests nor people would have understood God's providence. Their history as a nation was a sign of it, but the world had infused its spirit into them, the things of sense blinded their eyes to the true meaning of God's will, and they could not see anything but their own, and that will, perverted by the passions of human nature, was contrary to the will of God. Their minds, long accustomed to be interested and occupied by the world around them, had acquired a bent in its direction, and Satan wished to urge them forward because it led them further and further away from the true bearings of life.

In rejecting the tempter's suggestion our Lord quoted the words from Deut. vi. 16 ("Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"),[14] which referred to the time in the wilderness when the people doubted God's presence and His providence until they saw a supernatural proof of it at Massah, to show that it was not a sign from without which was needed, but a new spirit within; a more humble and reverent attitude towards Him, and willing hearts to believe His word. It completely shattered Satan's hopes of the establishment of a kingdom

[14] St. Matt. iv. 7.

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All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me

Matthew IV: 9

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Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him

Matthew IV: 11

on the lines the people expected, but they never lost their cravings for signs of its advent; time after time they besought our Lord to give them one from heaven as evidence of His mission. The wonders that He wrought were not the kind they coveted, yet in them was the power that a sincere and earnest seeker after truth might have found. Even the disciples were slow to perceive it as belonging to God, as the same power that ruled the world of nature. When it had been manifested in feeding the multitude, its significance was missed, and they were afraid in their peril on the waters of the Sea of Galilee because "they considered not the miracle of the loaves." [15]

While no suitable opening for a revelation of God's power was neglected, the proper time for it was accurately reckoned, and suitable means adopted for exhibiting it to the people. A marvellous exactitude of relationship is disclosed in our Lord's life between Himself and the Father, so that all might know how to behave under circumstances that require a right attitude towards God.

In the third temptation the personal is associated with the universal; the devil offered Jesus unlimited rule in return for His homage. There is no insidious meaning in this astounding overture; it is a bold and serious proposition, and is addressed to the love of power in man: the vulgar ambition of mere domination which belongs to universal human nature. Satan had recognized the royal nature of Jesus and the vast range of His mind, and wished to incite in Him the lust for power, which is never gratified except in proportion as he who receives it falls down and worships the tempter.

The great kings of the earth had attained their eminence by using their power to exalt themselves and enslave mankind. The Eastern despot occupied an isolated social pinnacle around which multitudes fawned and trembled; his undisputed word was law, and men shuddered at his glance; his glory shone through the steam of human toil, and the cost of the glitter

[15] St. Mark vi. 52.

of his pageants was paid by human lives. To become a King and change it all might have been a great achievement for Jesus, if He had passed beyond the limits He had set Himself in obedience to the will of God, but a better way He found in the submission of Himself to law, in loyalty to its Author in Whom right is enthroned, and by Whose will it is established.

For the temptation to be real to Jesus, and reasonable for others to understand, an exceeding high mountain was selected from whose height the point of vantage might be gained to satisfy its requirements. Doubt has frequently been expressed that a situation in any degree answering the moderate demands of probability could be found for such a purpose. The idea that the temptation was entirely subjective and had no correspondence with an objective event is contrary to the Divine teaching of the Incarnation, which has an outward form associated with an inward spirit for inculcating truth. This is obviously the method adopted by our Lord, and there is no reason to suppose a departure was made in this instance in the treatment He received, which He would naturally desire to explain to His followers for their instruction. The chief obstacle to the recognition of the natural interpretation of the narrative is due to the difficulty of believing in the existence of the high mountain. There is, however, a lofty peak on the east of the Jordan near the valley, which furnishes a prospect that would form the fabric of a vision of the Kingdoms of the world to one whose mind was charged with their history. The fortress-crowned summit of Jebel Ajlun, Kelat er Rubad, the Mizpeh of Gilead, which may have been the place where Moses stood to view the settled home of Israel, and the spot from whence Abraham saw the promised land, offers the most favourable situation in a country with narrow limits, which at that time was the centre of the world, for a representative survey of earth's vast empires.

Standing on the top of it I have seen the eastern plateau which stretches across the desert towards the ancient kingdoms of Babylon and Persia, the hills on the Dead Sea shore

that recede in the distance to the fringe of the land of Egypt, the central ridge of mountains across the river above the plain of Esdraelon, and Mount Carmel terminating abruptly above the shore of the great sea of the west, and on the north the snow-clad Lebanon, the sentinel of the Syrian border.

Before our Lord, as He gazed on the margin of the Jewish Fatherland, were the boundaries of the great empires of the world, a substantial basis for a vision of their glory. The future would not be hid from Him. His acquaintance with Greek culture by His association with Hellenic life in the northern towns of the country through His knowledge of the language, His experience of Roman law in their occupation of the lands of His birth, and the promise of the future in which these two elements were inevitably destined to combine for the spread of civilization filled the vivid picture of the past, present, and the future, and, like a panorama, passed unveiled before the mind of the Son of Man; and Satan offered all for His homage. As the fleeting vision faded a darker picture grew into form on which His choice was fixed. It was not for the government of the world by law He came, but by a stern self-restraint and unflagging toil He set His energies for deeds of freedom; a higher and holier purpose animated His soul than the desire to rule; an incredible and inexhaustible love for the welfare of humanity moved His heart. He came to save the world, not to enslave it; to elevate mankind, not Himself. Instead of the splendour of an earthly throne and a crown of gold, a cross with its inexorable pain, a circle of thorns for His fair brow, and the exhausting labour of a great sacrifice, were the means by which His Kingdom was to be established.

There is no liberty which has lifted high the heart of man and inspired his soul with love for others that has not been won by the sacrifice of selfish aims in lowly service. There is no life superbly true that has not been inspired by a sacrifice supremely great. The cross is bound up with the life of man; the necessity for sacrifice prevails in every sphere of effort. The stern condition must be fulfilled that he who

would serve others cannot serve himself, and if he would save them he must sacrifice himself. The disturbing element that rouses self to seek its own desire and inflame it for greater power is the tempter, and the only response to his dark design was given by our Lord: "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve." [16]

[16] St. Matt. iv. 10.

CHAPTER V

THE MESSIAH AND HIS MISSION

When the conflict had passed the devil went away for a time and angels came and ministered unto Jesus.[1] His strength restored, He left the sterile heights and dark ravines of the wilderness for the fellowship of men. His work lay before Him; the way in which it was to be accomplished He had determined; but, whatever plan He had formed in His mind, it has no definite shape for us to examine. His purpose is not so obscure; we can see it in the contest through which He emerged in triumph. He looked upon the world as God's world, and in that outlook there is the world's hope. He came to save it by sacrifice and serve it by inspiration. While He looked at it from above He approached it from within, by revealing to the soul of man the Kingdom of God in a form by which it could be perceived, and by awakening in man through an inward experience the desire to possess it. In His temptation it became manifest as the rule of the will of God in the heart of man, and man was regarded as a potential instrument for the establishment of God's Kingdom; not as the product of a system, but as the proof of a new personality in the loving response of a free man willing to do the will of God. It is not a mechanical freedom in man that God desires; it is the freedom of people who have known and resisted evil.

But freedom is impossible without power; Jesus therefore taught man about God. He exhibited His power, His goodness, and His care; He also showed men themselves and their need of God, so that when a man came to himself [2] he would turn to God and trust in Him for the power to resist the evil

[1] St. Matt. iv. 11. [2] Cf. St. Luke xv. 17.

that prevented man fully realizing the life which God intended him to enjoy. Thus the individual and the Kingdom grew together, and the Kingdom came by the progressive sanctification of the soul. Strength to resist evil entered into man through the operation of the will of God to fortify the will of man; a better life became possible by the introduction of a new Spirit, and a new influence emanating from the new life created an atmosphere for the development of the idea of freedom in others. Men may not have seen in the longing for liberty expressed by various movements in civilization God's purpose for the emancipation of the world from the power of evil, nor are they always able to perceive in the desire for liberty a symptom of the need of man for freedom from the tyranny of sin. Though no direct reference is made by them to evil, and men even ignore it, real freedom can never be obtained until the power of evil is overthrown.

When the schemes of great reformers for altering the abject conditions of human life deal with organization for the administration of their projects by something outside a man for the control of what there is within him, a still greater problem awaits them of finding the power to carry out the schemes they have devised on the principle of freedom in which they believe. No real progress can be made towards improvement by forcing laws on people; liberty is destroyed in the process; it is merely substituting one form of tyranny for another. All improvement depends on consent. Without loyal consent there cannot be the freedom which recognizes in others what it claims for itself.

In the progressive revelation of God the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ; [3] and His Gospel, the proclamation of liberty to the captive,[4] freedom from the power of evil, contains the gift of the power [5] to overcome evil. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." [6] Truth in the sense of reality formed the basis of His

[3] Gal. iii. 24.
[4] St. Luke iv. 18.
[5] St. John iii. 15, 16.
[6] St. John viii. 32.

teaching. Truth is power. And the man that tells the truth at all times, who is true in every word and every deed, has within him the power to rise triumphant over all the world. The life of Jesus has that power because He was perfectly true and perfectly free.

Truth does not come naturally to men; it has to be revealed. If it came naturally there would be no use for the faculties with which God has endowed mankind, no need for a man to exert himself; the indolent would fare as well as the diligent. Nor is truth revealed with that absolute certainty which precludes investigation, but with sufficient assurance for encouraging men to persist in their inquiry. The further they advance in accepting the truth, the stronger becomes the basis of their assurance.[7] It is uncertainty that makes men nerveless, that deprives them of the energy to put forth the best that is in them.

Uncertainty of the truth marked the time when Jesus came. The people had one hope — the hope of the Messiah; but that hope had lost its lustre in the delay of His appearing. Weariness having exhausted the spirit and dulled the mind, their ideas concerning Him were vague. They lived in an artificial world, glowing with the love of Oriental form and colour; no longer perceiving a Divine agency at work, the semblance of things rather than realities pleased their fancy. They wanted signs,[8] something outside on which they could gaze; they needed something inside on which they could live. Their desire for signs meant a form of revelation which furnished proofs beyond doubt and contradiction, that would save them from any effort of their own to discover the truth. So accustomed were they to signs they could not think for themselves, and the facts of life made no impression upon them. One supreme fact they had failed to notice — that inspiration belongs to men to whom the Spirit of God giveth understanding. Without understanding a knowledge of the truth, of the realities of life and God's dealing with them, signs were nothing more than charms. One

[7] St. Matt. xiii. 12. [8] St. Matt. xii. 39.

sign was as good as another, and as useless, to the man in whom the superficial aspect of things had destroyed his capacity for discerning the truth concerning them.

The real meaning of God's commandment had been lost in its literal interpretation. "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

"And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart. . . . And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

"And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house and on thy gates." [9]

These great words had so little real significance for the people that a small leather box (a phylactery) of four compartments, containing parchment scrolls inscribed with passages from the Law, was fastened by leather straps to the forehead. A similar box tied to the left arm, was as near to the heart as the command was understood. The people obeyed as literally the command to write the words on the door-posts by placing at the entrance of the house the Mezuzah, a little case in which the words "El Shaddai" (the Almighty) were visible; and they left it there.

The Jews looked upon their Scriptures as the actual words of God, invested with a sanctity which created a value in the letters themselves. Laws were similarly regarded; hence the subserviency to the letter and the total absence of the recognition of the spirit and principle of the law.

Outside things had become so prominent a feature of life that men accepted appearances for realities. At every turn in the short and narrow streets of the cities men were involved in appearances. The signs each one bore in the gaily coloured crowd of the bazaar settled his position in the community

[9] Deut. vi. 4–9. This reverence for the letter prompted them to refrain from committing to writing the traditions of the elders and the teaching of the rabbis. Constant repetition engraved them on the memory until they were regarded as equal in value to the original law. The letter of the law of God assumed the same importance.

and separated one man from another. Class distinctions, with which each man had to be content, placed an indelible mark upon him and fixed his condition; but it bore no resemblance to his character. Jesus saw these fetters on the mind and the use made of them for interfering with man's liberty. It was not the abolition of class distinctions that He sought, but the equality and freedom of mankind before God, and He showed by His own life that, in His fellowship, every man might possess the Divine Spirit for the formation of the character of the children of the Divine Father.[10]

He accepted the necessary conditions of the life of the time as He found them.

He had nothing to say about Government or politics, about labour and capital, about the distribution of wealth, or social problems. He knew that organizations working from without a man could not adequately deal with the spirit within him. It was the whole man and his outlook Jesus came to change by the introduction of a new spirit; not merely to save mankind from poverty and injustice and social disability, but from the root of all mischief, sin; to cleanse the spring of human life at its source by the supremacy of the Divine Spirit.[11] His salvation does not therefore imply neglect of external wrong, but its removal by virtue of the change wrought in the man who receives the Spirit of God to do His will. Every department of human life and social organization were to be sanctified by His spirit, the true spirit of liberty and progress.

The Kingdom Jesus came to establish stands for a moral and spiritual, not a territorial, conception of His rule; the rule of God in the sphere of human thought and feeling, His rule over the social, political, and intellectual forces in the world.

He alluded to the world as having a temperament devoid of aspiration, and an attitude destitute of reverence, which exercises a perilous influence on the desire for a higher and better

[10] St. John viii. 36.

[11] The principle of the Incarnation.

life. He saw, what other men through Him have seen, that worldliness is the spirit of childishness carried into manhood, the desire for the visible, the tangible, until things present, so alluring at first, eventually rule the life. The Jews had passed under its sway; while they loathed the practices of the Gentiles, they failed to see the form of worldliness which held them fast.

Their religion was external, and looked like a business advertisement. The Scribes and Pharisees, who professed to be its faithful witnesses, displayed it where men could more easily notice their regard for its appearance. They made broad their phylacteries to ensure recognition, paid their tithes in careful detail, ostentatiously distributed their alms, appeared to fast and seemed to pray. Outwardly they were estimable; inwardly they were corrupt.[12]

The people generally were divided into two classes, "the righteous" and "the sinners."[13] All who professed to be religious were called "righteous"; the rest were "sinners." A simple and natural distinction, according to the "signs" of the times. By carefully observing their laws the "righteous" imagined they were right. After paying their tithes and saying their prayers, they believed that God had received what was due to Him, and they were at liberty to live as they desired. If by keeping one set of laws they could satisfy God and add to their merit, they thought that more laws would increase their credit with God and release them even further from their natural obligations.[14] Having successfully lied to themselves, they believed they could as easily cheat God, and deceive their fellow-men.

The rulers pretended to be free, as they professed to be pious. They writhed under the galling servitude of Rome, they felt the sting of the presence of the Roman soldier, yet they walked with conscious pride of their place in the world, and looked with undisguised contempt on all who did not belong to their race. Suspicion regarding their position prepared

[12] St. Luke xi. 39, 42. [13] St. Luke v. 32. [14] See "Corban," p. 293.

them for wrath at anything which might be construed to refer to their servile state. An angry outburst followed Christ's statement respecting the bondage of sin, when He said: "The truth shall make you free." [15] It rankled in their hearts, although it had nothing to do with their subservience to Roman dominion. They answered: "We be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man." [16] And the Roman soldiers, whom they feared, garrisoned their city; a Roman governor exercised his rule over them; and they paid tribute to a Roman Emperor.

A more hopeless state of mind for obtaining knowledge of the truth, for observing facts, and for recognizing the actual and ordinary affairs of life can scarcely be conceived. And there were no newspapers recording the events of the day, circulating reliable information, detecting flaws in public methods and the weakness of public morals, stimulating opinion and ventilating ideas, to formulate plans for the benefit of the people and foster the desire for liberty. Rumour — and we know what value can be placed on rumour — kept the tongues of the people busy, and such bazaar gossip as forms the staple product of the Eastern mind employed their imagination without profit. We can thus understand why Jesus afterwards desired to place a salutary check on the dissemination of the reports of His miracles.[17] Repetition might carry a confused meaning about what He had done, and cause the lesson He wished to convey to disappear in common gossip. The most powerful lessons are those which are least talked about; they embody ideas too vast and deep for articulation, and need time to permeate the mind and sink into the heart. And the lessons taught by the Man of Galilee in simple speech became a mighty force.

It is necessary to appreciate the stupendous task Jesus had before Him besides the way in which He undertook His work. Mood and temper and character react on everything that reaches them, and mind and heart interpret according to tem-

[15] St. John viii. 32. [16] St. John viii. 33. [17] St. Matt. viii. 4, ix. 30.

perament and character as well as knowledge. The Jews failed to understand the true inwardness of Christ's teaching, as they failed to recognize the incarnate God, because they wanted what they desired in the way they expected. Nothing contrary to their expectation and experience satisfied the rulers, who were able to exercise their will on the people. Powerful interests, religious, political, social, and economic, in the hands of a few, controlled the multitude, who had everything to gain by opposing them; but their opposition rarely went beyond a murmur. The people were hopelessly impotent; vested interests were extremely powerful.

The religious interest of the Scribes and Pharisees very quickly realized the necessity for defence against the teaching of Jesus. Aroused by the force of its reality, bitter feelings awakened in the hearts of the rulers, who saw in the formidable nature of the new movement their own condemnation. That a mere layman should dare to set up His claim to spread a new doctrine contrary to their interpretation of the law stirred in them the most violent opposition.

The social and political interests represented by the rich Sadducean families, who, disturbed by the increasing number of the disciples of Jesus, caused the rulers to fear that a change in the political situation might involve them in serious trouble with the Roman authorities. Alarmed, the politicians said, "If we let Him . . . alone, the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." [18]

The financial interests of the people in Jerusalem were very considerable. Pilgrims came to the Temple in such numbers that a lucrative business filled the pockets of both priests and people through the various industries required to meet the needs of visitors. By cleansing the Temple courts Jesus inflicted a serious blow on the traffic encouraged by the priests.

The whole character of society was in danger of being changed by the renewing spirit inculcated by the teaching of Jesus; so the rulers thought who disliked it, and their percep-

[18] St. John xi. 48.

tion in this case was not at fault. Against their interests the Man of Galilee appeared as the revelation of a higher and better life, a life for man involving a change so great that Jesus termed it a new birth, the renewal of the whole of the spiritual man, a radical alteration of his inner spiritual mood.[19] He exhibited this life on earth, and He left witnesses to make known what they had seen and heard, and they declared that they had also received something which had changed their lives.

Jesus left no account of His works and words in His own writing, further evidence of His love for man, in keeping from him the outward form and securing his freedom for independent investigation. If He had left writing of His own, every letter would have been regarded with a sanctity that might have led again to the worship of the literal form, and the probable loss of the spiritual element in the narrative of His life. The Jews had stumbled through their excessive respect for the letter and their consequent failure to recognize the spirit, "for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." [20]

Nothing has been found in the Gospels about the physical features of Jesus, nothing to help men to see His outward form. This omission is remarkable, and apparently intentional, so utterly unlike the ordinary method of treating the subject of a memoir, that it seems to be His Divinity rather than His humanity to which men are directed. What else can it mean than this; and the support of His teaching that it is the inward spirit, the character of a man, which matters, and not his appearance?

There must have been other characteristics familiar to His friends, which seem to have been deliberately omitted from the narrative of His life, while His manner of looking and the tone of His voice passed naturally into the story without being observed. Look and tone are never forgotten, even when date and place fade from the memory. Something in the look

[19] *Cf.* Nicodemus, pp. 127, 128; Woman of Samaria, p. 135; Confession of St. Peter, p. 281: and St. John vii. 38.

[20] 2 Cor. iii. 6.

of Jesus stirred the souls of men. The questioning in His eyes held those who saw His face; the wistfulness in it moved them. He "looked on Peter" [21] when the disciple denied His Lord, and that look meant the saving of his soul. He "looked up" [22] to Zacchæus, the Publican, in the sycamore-tree, and in looking sought the lost.

The tone of His Voice, the touch of His hand, were always remembered. There was a note of certainty in His voice greater than other men knew, and His touch, when he healed the leper, impressed the disciples almost as much as the miracle of healing.

So natural are these reminiscences that they cannot be imaginary. So indelible was the impression left on the minds and hearts of those who wandered about with Jesus, so simple has been the method of imparting their knowledge, that it bears the stamp of truth, and men have realized it as true, and have found in their search after truth the same power which the disciples of old received.

Though only fragments of the wonderful life of Jesus have been preserved, yet from them we are able to construct the fabric. Trifling variations are noticeable, but all the facts related, although sometimes presented in a different form, are in substantial accord. If the four Gospels had been alike in every particular suspicion would have been aroused by the apparent collusion of the writers, and the value of the Evangelists as independent witnesses seriously impaired. Now their credibility is supported by the diversity of their methods.

One of the most remarkable features of this record of the Messiah and His mission is found in the brief space of time covered by the incidents enumerated by the Evangelists. Only about forty days of the whole time are accounted for in the occurrences which furnish the Gospel story, if we exclude the time spent on journeys and the periods when Jesus lived in seclusion. It seems almost incredible that so much is found in so little; that in the memories of forty days there are

[21] St. Luke xxii. 61.

[22] St. Luke xix. 5.

incidents which have become more important than anything else in the history of the world.

The writers do not profess to follow the ordinary methods of biographers. They relate important utterances, and present us with pictures of extraordinary events. We have fleeting glimpses of unrecorded relationships, of personal friendships made in circumstances altogether unknown, occasional references to movements from one place to another without any sequence or order, and the gaps in the history seem to rob us of its natural qualities. Here and there specimens are given of a day's occupation,[23] unlike the work of other men, but no special reference is made to the distinction; the writers record it without any comment of their own. They inform us of the effect produced on the people rather than on themselves. The people were amazed, not the disciples.

What are these fragments collected by men of little note if the enterprise to which they were committed by their Master is of no account in the reckoning? Not much more than what happened in their experience! But the venture had behind it a larger experience of the work of Jesus, the Christ, Whose life the Apostles reveal. Others had gained by a personal knowledge of Him an interest in His life and work, and they accepted the Gospels as comprising what they also knew, the testimony of the truth about Jesus, which the men who formed the early Church handed down to their successors in the enterprise of the Gospel; and the Church of Christ stands as the witness of Christ. However imperfect that witness may be, it is less imperfect than it seems, and is due to men taking a part of the Gospel and thinking it is the whole. Some men think of the sacrifice of Christ, and it becomes the centre of their worship, as if it embraced all the Gospel for them, yet it may be only the beginning of their life's new day. Others take the Sermon on the Mount and say that it comprises all the Gospel men need, forgetting man's first need is salvation from sin through the sacrifice of Christ. The full, rich Gos-

[23] St. Mark iv. 35.

pel comprehends more than the parts which men emphasize for their own satisfaction, and differ with one another about their views of them. Amid these many aspects of the truth there is a reconciling element which Jesus left as His legacy, which all men must accept and use if they would understand the gladdest news that ever broke on the ears of mortal man. "This is My commandment, that ye love one another." [24] "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." [25]

Inspiration does not interfere with the natural ability of the authors of the Gospels either to increase or diminish their activity. It is the human element they employed in compiling the brief history of their Lord which exhibits their freedom, and which makes it more agreeable to the natural man, while the power of the Divine Spirit moves through their efforts to draw him into contemplation of the supernatural. If all had been in absolute agreement, one narrative might have sufficed, and we should have lost the human part which encourages us to act with the freedom that is necessary for us to express our own feelings towards the true life of man. The Evangelists have nothing to say about their feelings, they were too much occupied with the facts before them; we do not even know the result of our Lord's work in them from what they say so much as from what we see. The total absence of praise or blame in their description of the treatment Jesus received from friends and foes leaves us free to form our own opinion of His ministry. No attempt is made by them to persuade men to accept the different accounts they gave in simple language of His life and work. Its simplicity is a guarantee of its being true. The Evangelists had seen God. Their illumination they do not describe; it was an inward experience; His gift of sight. Our fluctuating experience may obscure our view; natural feelings do not always help us to realize the supernatural; we need also His Spirit to see the unveiling of the personality and purpose of Jesus Christ.

[24] St. John xv. 12. [25] St. John xiii. 35.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

While Jesus was engaged in His conflict with the devil, the religious authorities in Jerusalem were occupied in the consideration of the news of the popular movement in the Jordan Valley. Rumours of the success of John the Baptist's mission had caused a stir in the Sanhedrin, and its members could no longer ignore the agitation produced in the multitude. Something must be done by the spiritual leaders of the people, either to acknowledge the preacher or denounce his work as subversive of the proper recognition of their traditions. If he were the Messiah, it was obviously their duty to support him; on the other hand a merely fanatical reformer might be removed, and his followers dispersed. Delay in dealing with the commotion that had been created would only lessen their influence with the people; it was therefore decided to send a deputation of inquiry, and priests and Levites in the name of the rulers went to John and asked him the question, "Who art thou?" "What sayest thou of thyself?" He answered frankly, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord." [1] John had no thought of himself, nor of his reputation; he was only a voice, the herald of the approach of another; his work was only a symbol, the sign of the reality that was coming. He was the preacher of the dawn, and it was about to pass into the day of the greater glory he had announced. Those who had followed him were soon to leave him, even to grow weary of him, and some who had been moved to better ways slipped back into their old paths; in others a reaction set in, the terrors he had awakened in them were lost, and, having recovered from their fright, they mocked him with contemptuous remarks about his per-

[1] St. John i. 22, 23.

son [2] and manner in revenge for the fear he had caused. But his popularity did not disappear before the way into the Kingdom had been made plain, and the Messiah recognized by some who had believed his message.

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and said, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. This is He of Whom I said, After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me." [3] "Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples: and looking upon Jesus as He walked he said, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus." [4] A greater than John attracted his disciples, and John was left for the One Who was preferred before him.

From the narratives of St. Matthew and St. Luke we gather that John's ministry commenced in the wilderness of Judea, the southern end of the Jordan Valley, and as we peruse St. John's Gospel we notice that he continued his work along the side of the river. We read of him at Ænon, within the Samaritan hills, on the western boundary of the Jordan Plain, and also in the presence of Herod Antipas; but the scene of his operations was first restricted to the course of the river, and to that part of it with sloping banks. In very few places would it be possible conveniently to enter the water; the banks are usually very high, and even at most of the fords the crossing is dangerous. The only places on the river's bank where it would be reasonably possible for penitents to walk into the water were few. Two only are generally identified with the Baptist's work, one on the east of Jericho, and the other farther up the stream. Both of them have been regarded as the scene of our Lord's baptism by men who are well-known Palestine explorers. It is, however, more probable that penitents were baptized at both fords, some in the lower reaches of the river where John first commenced his mission, and afterwards on the eastern bank near Bethabara.[5] The Baptist's move-

[2] St. Luke vii. 33. [3] St. John i. 29, 30. [4] St. John i. 35, 37.
[5] In the Revised Version we have Bethany for Bethabara, and the rea-

ments were due to the season of the year and to the convenience of the people. His presence at Ænon was certainly owing to the extreme heat, when crowds could not walk about in the sweltering valley. An old Arab geographer describes it as "the mouth of hell." Van de Velde, the explorer, on approaching the Ghor (the rift), the Arabic name of the Jordan Valley, said: "The warm and fiery wind from the Ghor met us right in the face. . . . The air seemed to be on fire. . . . My guides, as well as myself, thought we should die in this gigantic furnace."

Having crossed the Ghor several times in the great heat of summer, I can testify that this is an appropriate description. During the winter it is pleasant; in early spring delightful; but later, life there is intolerable, and in the summer impossible, without a dwelling for a shelter. Josephus says that "the people of Jericho are clothed in linen only, even when snow covers the rest of Judea." [6] When we learn that John baptized at Ænon because there was much water, we may rest assured it was summer, because it is the only place in the neighbourhood with much water at that season, and the reference to the change of place is a further indication of the time of the year.

When our Lord joined the company after His temptation John had evidently moved farther up the stream to the ford near Bethabara. It was past the middle of March, and the

son for the change is due to the discovery that Origen changed the name of Bethany for Bethabara in the MSS. where "in almost all copies" he said it was found. *Bethabara* probably means the house of fords, and *Bethany* the house of shipping. Bethabara has now been identified on the discovery by the late Colonel Conder of the ford Abarah, one of the main fords of the Jordan near Beisan, across which Gideon's army followed the Midianites (Judges vii. 24), and the great highway from east to west.

This ford is about twenty miles from Cana. There is no place along the river more likely in appearance for John's purpose; the ground slopes gradually towards the water from the plain, where a large concourse of people might easily assemble.

Somewhat similar to it in a less degree is the lower ford where John first baptized, and where sand-dunes offered a pulpit for his preaching.

At most of the other fords there is a rapid current, deep water, and soft mud.

[6] Josephus, *Wars* iv, viii. 3.

weather was already hot — too hot in the lower part of the valley for comfort — and the pilgrims attending John's preaching sought cover for their accommodation in the neighbouring village of Bethabara amongst the trees on the river's bank, or in simple structures made from their branches on the plain. In one of these booths Jesus probably sought shelter on leaving the wilderness, and John's two disciples followed Him, when their master pointed to Him as the Lamb of God. In response to His question, "What seek ye?" they asked for His abode, saying, "Where dwellest Thou?" [7] He answered, "Come and see," and, as it was about the tenth hour — four o'clock in the afternoon — they remained with Him until the close of the day. One of the two which heard John speak of Jesus, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother; the other unnamed was undoubtedly John the writer, who had thus described the circumstances of the call of the first two disciples in the simple yet pregnant words, "Come and see." John was the most thoughtful of all the Lord's followers, and entered most intimately into the very secrecy of the Lord's teaching. He was the beloved disciple. How much of the significance of the Baptist's description of Christ as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," was observed by John the Apostle we cannot surmise; it was probably nothing more at the time than the moral perfection of Jesus suggested by the Baptist's description, and the transparent purity of His heart, which he and his companion instinctively recognized. These men were sensibly in need of something which they had not found in the baptism of John, something which they saw in the Stranger whom they addressed in terms of great respect as Rabbi. They soon advanced in knowledge, for Andrew immediately sought his brother Simon with the wonderful news of their discovery, saying: "We have found the Messias, the Christ." [8] And when Jesus beheld him He said: "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas." [9] He saw in Simon what no one else had seen, the movement in him

[7] St. John i. 38. [8] St. John i. 41. [9] St. John i. 42.

towards a richer and fuller life unknown even to himself. This revelation proved for Simon an attraction to the Master Who had discerned in him and interpreted to him a possibility of strength for which he yearned in his instinct for good. He said, "Thou shalt be called Cephas," *i.e.* "Rock." Out of the mixture of instability, weakness, and impulsiveness a new man shall arise whose natural characteristics shall be blended and ripened into consistency and endurance.

Nothing like this method of selection had been adopted before; no one had ever possessed the power to search a man's soul for its possibilities, and in the discovery draw him towards the source of the power required for their fulfilment.

After Simon, Philip, a man from the same town, was called to join the little company, and Jesus, purposing to go into Galilee, moved northwards with His new disciples. On the way Philip's joy caused him to seek another to share the glad tidings; he found Nathaniel, probably on their approach to Cana, and told him that the Messiah had come. When he said He was Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, Nathaniel's comment was discouraging; he expressed instant dissatisfaction. The reputation borne by Nazareth was a hindrance to his belief in Philip's news. Local rivalry would not entirely account for Nathaniel's remark, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" [10] Beyond this feeling of the inhabitants of one village for another there is in most of the districts of Palestine a definite knowledge of the character of their people. Each of them has features which are represented in the public mind by a particular description, yet in every place there are men better than its reputation, and Philip, undismayed by his friend's reluctance, pressed his invitation to "Come and see" until it was accepted. Nathaniel's reception immediately convinced him that Jesus was no ordinary resident of the despised village; the words with which he was greeted disarmed his fears and removed his doubts. "Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite

[10] St. John i. 46.

indeed, in whom is no guile!" [11] In amazement he asked, "Whence knowest Thou me?" "Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." His seeing had a greater significance than mere recognition. It meant that Nathaniel was understood as well as seen, and his surprise furnishes us with knowledge of our Lord as well as himself. We notice again His marvellous insight into character, a perceptive faculty so clear that it penetrated the heart and disclosed its secrets. He knew what was in man in a degree that never could be measured by ordinary human knowledge gained amongst the people of an obscure village and occasional intercourse with the greater world of life beyond its borders. It was a part of Himself, a power within Him, recognized by Nathaniel in the answer [12] he had received to his enquiry as something more than natural intelligence, and without further hesitation he acknowledged Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God, "the King of Israel." [13] Though hastily formed and immature, his judgment proved he was conscious of a presence far higher than he had ever seen, and as great as he had ever expected. Unlike the majority of the class of people who ardently longed for the Messiah, he was without guile, free from prejudice, from unwillingness to accept the truth when it appeared in a different form from what he expected, yielding without argument when his unbiassed mind received it. He believed in Jesus when he discovered that Jesus believed in him. It is this consciousness of Divine recognition that attracts attention and constitutes the call; then follows the gradual revelation of the greater things of the Kingdom of God.[14] At first Nathaniel saw nothing in the name of Jesus, and nothing good in Nazareth; but when he saw Jesus Himself, heard His voice, and recognized His power, he welcomed Him as the Messiah — not perhaps in the reality of His Person and Office; that was reserved for a future vision when the eyes of his soul were fully

[11] St. John i. 47.
[12] St. John i. 48.
[13] St. John i. 49.
[14] St. John i. 50.

opened, and he was better able to comprehend the great love of God for man.[15] Jacob's dream, the symbol of what was promised, would unfold a wider meaning than he had hitherto perceived. He might have recalled the picture of the sleeping wanderer, the lost son of Isaac, when God's pity overshadowed him and a ladder formed the pathway for God's messengers; he had yet to learn that Christ was the intermediary between earth and heaven, that through Him the portals of glory would open wide, and by Him God's love for the lost be revealed.

[15] St. John i. 51.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST MIRACLE OF CHRIST

"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the marriage."[1] Thus St. John continues his record of the beginning of the public work of his Lord. Accompanied by His disciples, of whom John was one, and therefore an eye-witness, He went to Cana. Many discussions have arisen respecting the claims of two villages in Galilee for the honour of being the scene of this notable event. Between Kefr Kenna, on the high road from Nazareth to the Sea of Galilee, and Kenna el Jelil, a few miles farther north, there is very little choice in the evidence they furnish for pre-eminence. Kefr Kenna is the traditional site, and receives more favour, because it is on the tourist route from Nazareth to Tiberias, and nearer to Bethabara. Either of them will answer the purpose of the narrative, as there is nothing involved in their identification beyond the desire to know the certainty of a particular site, and when it is not of any assistance in elucidating the story there is no need for decision. From Bethabara to Cana the distance is about twenty miles, one day's journey. The statement "on the third day" does not necessarily indicate the length of time occupied in walking to Cana; it refers more likely to the order of events beginning with the testimony of John the Baptist that Jesus was the Lamb of God.[2] The next day John publicly drew the attention of his disciples to Jesus, and they attached themselves to their new Leader, and the day following (the third day), on their way to Cana, Nathaniel joined them.

Bethany (Bethabara) beyond Jordan is still regarded by some people as situated on the left bank of the river opposite Jericho. An Eastern man, able to start on a journey from

[1] St. John ii. 1. [2] St. John i. 29.

this place at his own time, accompanied by friends anxious to converse with him, would occupy more than three days in walking to Cana. Dean Farrar says he has covered the distance in that time, presumably on horseback, but acknowledges "it requires quick travelling." [3]

An Oriental is not a quick traveller on foot; he moves leisurely, lingers often on the way, and when he is engaged in conversation he rests frequently. Jesus and His new disciples could not have arrived at Cana for a marriage on the third day from a place so far distant as the one over Jordan beyond Jericho, and more especially as time was required to persuade the man under a fig-tree to join them on their journey. Reference to the fig-tree not only denotes the time of the year, but indicates, when a man sits beneath its shade, the time of the day, and furnishes more evidence for disagreement with the southern situation for Bethabara. Fig-trees grew in the vicinity of a permanent settlement, and, though we are not told the name of the place near where Nathaniel was found, we naturally assume it was close to a town or village, and presumably his own town of Cana. Jesus and His disciples therefore had reached the place, as we should expect, in ample time to prepare for the wedding.

The northern site of Bethabara (Bethany beyond Jordan) is not only appropriate for this occasion, it is equally suitable for a later journey, when Jesus left Bethabara in Perea after the death of Lazarus, and reached the home of Martha and Mary on the fourth day,[4] that is exactly the time He would naturally occupy on His way to Bethany in Judea, whereas, one day would have sufficed if Bethabara had been opposite Jericho.

No reference is made of a return to Nazareth. Jesus had apparently turned His back on His old home, and His old life, when He went to the Jordan in search of John the Baptist. The call had come to him; henceforth He was the Messiah with a Mission, and no longer a Carpenter with a workshop.

[3] See Farrar's *Life of Christ*, vol. i. p. 160. [4] St. John xi. 17.

As an invited Guest, it was necessary for Him to be at the wedding in time for the supper. His disciples were doubtless called to the marriage as His friends, and this suggests an early start from Bethabara, and an early arrival in Cana for the invitation to be given to them for the feast. The presence of His mother, her knowledge of the resources of the family, and the prominent place she occupied in being able to address the servants, indicate a kinship with the giver of the feast. And her reference to the need of more wine seems to have been partly due to the appearance of the new guests. It was also a sign of the intimacy she enjoyed in the household, and her desire for the proper treatment of her Son's friends. His answer [5] to her statement "They have no wine" is somewhat perplexing, not merely in the form of it, which is a consequence of rendering the original expression "Woman" into equivalent English, but in its meaning. There is a gentle rebuke in the courteous address, and, though we may be assured it was made gracefully, yet it must have been startling in its effect. The tone of wonder expressed in the last recorded words our Lord addressed to his mother, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" [6] is not here shown; instead of it a deeper meaning is evident. "What have I to do with thee?" was a common term of difference without disrespect; but it conveyed to the mother a sign that the tender relationship of mother and Son had reached a stage when a new life opens into directions which lie beyond a parent's control, that the long human fellowship must take a different course; His mother and His brethren in future will be those who do the will of God, who belong to the Kingdom.[7] She had seen His development without realizing the deep purpose, the wide aim of His Divine Mission, but with an expectation of greatness which she might share. The events of the last few weeks could not have been hidden from her; their import suggested a possi-

[5] St. John ii. 4. Woman (Γύναι) is the same word used by our Lord on the cross, also to Mary Magdalene. Augustus addressed Cleopatra in Dio Cassius, *Hist.* Lib. xii., as Γύναι.

[6] St. Luke ii. 49.

[7] St. Matt. xii. 47–50.

bility of power she could neither understand nor measure. Whatever it was, she had no part in its movement because she was His mother, and our Lord's gentle rebuke showed it plainly in the words, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come"— that is, the hour for a public declaration of His Messiahship; the people's need was always the time for help. It appeared when the company were assembled in the guest-chamber, and the hour came when the circumstances were ready for His service.

Although His mother had nothing more to do with it, she discerned its advent, and said to the servants, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." The sight of the waterpots, the presence of the attendants, the need of the guests, are all trivial incidents, yet so reasonable that no one can hesitate in accepting the record of what happened at the village wedding, even when consideration could not be given to the true inwardness of the meaning of the miracle that followed. Those present were mostly concerned with the liberality of the purveyor of the feast, and the quality of his wine; few of the guests were aware of the power of Jesus. There was no inordinate display, no majestic movements were visible; the servants filled the waterpots at His word — in their alacrity filled them to the brim — and forthwith drew from them wine, and conveyed it to the governor of the feast. Everything was done simply and naturally, as if there were nothing at all extraordinary. The governor made a mild joke in his surprise at the quality of the wine, the only jest that is found in the Bible. It is only striking because of its allusion to the supply of another and better kind of wine, one of those casual, and therefore more natural, references which aid truth.

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him." [8]

This manifestation of the glory of the Lord is the essential feature of the narrative of the village wedding. Nothing else

[8] St. John ii. 11.

signifies except to form a setting for the wonderful picture, the circumstances for the scene, the opportunity for the sign, of the glory of the Lord. By the power of His Divine Spirit [9] He converted water into wine. It was the symbol of His own life, and the work He came to perform for others. He took upon Him our nature to take it unto God. It was the glory of Christ to take human life and make it Divine. His glory was not only in the display of power; that was the outward form, the sign of it; the inward meaning of His act also contained His glory. The miracle only made the hidden glory visible. When His Spirit enters the life of a man singularly incapable in himself of exhibiting the life of Christ, the quality of his poor life is changed, new desires are born and enriched by a closer fellowship with Christ for the fulfilment of His Divine purpose, and a flavour is given to its representation. We know then, by the likeness it bears to the life of Jesus, that it has been transformed. In no other way can we ascertain the truth than by observation.[10] We cannot know things in themselves, only in and through their external appearance; nor can we think of the existence of any being without at least supposing an outward token under which it is revealed to us. It is not even possible to imagine a man, unless we assume he has a form and actions which are appropriate expressions of humanity; and, to believe in God, some display of power transcending all human energy is necessary as a suitable revelation. Miracles are a natural consequence of God in Christ Jesus. They do not attest the truth of the revelation; but they are a witness to the authority of Him Who made it. They are not the only evidence of His Divinity, these signs of Divine power; the realization of the true aim of God in the life of man, the purpose for which they were manifested, must also be taken into consideration. No attempt is made by the Evangelists, in their record of the miraculous power of our Lord, to explain

[9] *The Miracles of Jesus*, p. 33, by Archibishop Lang.
[10] Mozley's *Bampton Lectures on Miracles*, note 1, p. 244.

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water

John II: 7

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise

John II: 16

or describe it; they assume it with the natural simplicity of familiarity, as if they were unconscious of exciting curiosity, unaware of having said anything to cause men to wonder either at their story of the work of their Lord or the manifestation of His power. The natural and the supernatural are united with the ease of the certainty of their knowledge.

In the miracle at Cana we may discern the unfolding of the purpose of Jesus; it is significant of the work of His life to transform the world by the conversion of society through the regeneration of man. Where the supremacy of the Divine Spirit is found the same process is in operation, a new and positive factor is introduced into life that does not disown the innocent gaiety of homely pleasure. Laughter is not banished by the presence of Jesus. The singing soul has a greater glory in it than the sad countenance. In this we see the difference between the Forerunner of the Kingdom and its King. John came to prepare men for the Kingdom; Christ came to show it unto them. The former was solitary and unsocial, loud and fierce in his denunciation of sin to rouse in men the desire to escape from it; the Messiah entered into men's lives to share their joys and sorrows and keep sin away. He set seal on the union of man and maid to make it pure, and manifested His glory in the home to promote its happiness. The new disciples saw it, and believed on Him, in this beginning of miracles. Other guests were too busily engrossed with the result of His work for them; nothing is said of its effect on the mother of Jesus; it is tacitly understood; the only persons really interested were the men who followed Him from the Jordan in their eagerness to know more about Him. It was a momentary scene in which His Divine glory was shown. And so much of it surrounds all men; seeing and not perceiving they pass along the way of life in ignorance.

The miracles of Jesus are the testimony of God revealing Himself in Him, for the fulness of God dwelt in Him. We might speak of the extraordinary works of His life without

employing the word "miracle" to characterize them. He used the term signs [11] instead of the word with which we are familiar, and these signs were the tokens of the power He exhibited for the purpose of directing men's minds to the revelation of the Kingdom He came to establish in their hearts; each of them was adapted to a particular case, and the power itself is identical with the omnipotence of God. And as our Lord in such operations was one with the Father, the state of mind in which He accomplished His work was also in harmony with Him. He speaks of the power He displays in miracles as God's power working through Him,[12] and His words as Spirit and Life.[13] When He sent His disciples on their mission the power they exercised in the performance of their works of healing came from God through faith in the words of their Lord. His word was the productive principle by which receptive faith partook of the power that was destined to effect the miracle.

The believers in miraculous power, on the same principle, received in the moment of the working of the miracle, by the sympathetic elevation of their mind, a share in the disposition of the mind of Christ, and in this moment of their approach to God the miracle became an operating force in their life. Thus faith was necessary in many cases for the working of miracles, but not in all; some were works of Divine beneficence, as in the feeding of the multitudes. The social position of the person on whom or for whom the miracle was wrought had no relation to Divine selection; it was the condition of the heart, and not the distinction of the person that was required.

Thus the works of Christ harmonized with His teaching; both illustrated the purpose of God's Kingdom. His great aim was to make all men sure that the Kingdom of God had come. His signs conveyed visible lessons to help men to see it, whether they accepted them or not. Some believed and were satisfied; others were roused into active hostility; the rest who saw them were more or less indifferent, and took no further

[11] *σημεῖα*, St. John iv. 48. [12] St. John xiv. 10. [13] St. John vi. 63.

interest in them. The attention created by the signs drew within the reach of our Lord's influence all who were likely to profit. His words accompanied His works, and the seed of the Kingdom was sown in the world of men.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BEGINNING OF THE MINISTRY

From Cana Jesus went to Capernaum with His mother, His brethren, and His disciples.[1] They followed the road over a well-cultivated plain to the hills above the sea of Galilee. The modern traveller turns towards the southern end of the lake. As he rides down the western declivity of the commanding heights, difficult at times for an inexperienced rider, his desire to gaze on the placid water beneath him is easily gratified. Even if the view be regarded for itself alone, without reference to the romantic interest of its past history, it will fulfil any moderate expectations. The bright blue sea in the pear-shaped basin, 682 feet below the level of the ocean, lying almost deserted in so deep an impression, has a beauty of its own, perhaps of an unnatural kind, more impressive in its solitude than if it were crowded with fishing-boats and pleasure-steamers. It is thirteen miles long, and nearly seven miles across the widest part on the north, its apex being on the south, from whence the Jordan flows in a crystal stream, a striking contrast to its entrance on the north-east. From no point can both ends be seen, but the central and northern parts are everywhere visible except from the extreme south.

Tiberias is now the only town on its shore. Beyond the ruined basaltic walls and towers to the south-west on the narrow strip of land that borders the water, rises a small white building with a dome. Four hot springs (140° Fahr.) are there, the baths of Tiberias mentioned by Pliny and Josephus when famous for their healing qualities beyond the bounds of the land of Israel. To these medicinal waters people flock in large numbers. The name of the baths has been preserved throughout the ages, and their reputation, now confined within

[1] St. John ii. 12.

narrower limits, still survives. I once joined the multitude of stricken humanity, when in the neighbourhood, for the sake of a servant, but the scene within the walls forced me to retire, and the man I took inside recovered his health without the aid of the baths. Wasps in possession of the place in large numbers terrified him; other inmates, fearing the consequences of their fever more than the hostile insects, splashed in the heated basins, surrounded by the accumulated dirt of many years.

The town of Tiberias, partially destroyed by an earthquake in 1837, dejected and forlorn in appearance, appeals eloquently for recovery and relief from its squalor; its notoriety may be imagined from the frequent description of native visitors as "the court of the King of Fleas." Josephus says it was built by Herod Antipas near the warm baths called Ammaus (now Hammam), and named after his friend and patron, the Roman Emperor Tiberius. Ruins of the ancient wall exist today; the more imposing structures — citadel, palace, and forum — have disappeared. Herod granted the town many privileges, and made it the capital of Galilee. After the destruction of Jerusalem A.D. 70, it became the seat of Rabbinical learning, and the cradle of modern Judaism. Here Rabbi Judah, towards the end of the second century, collected and committed to writing the great mass of traditional law known as the Mishna. This was followed by its supplement and commentary, the Gemara (the Jerusalem Talmud), in the next century.

Orthodox Jews refused at first to dwell in the Herodian town because heathen statues adorned the castle walls and its foundations were laid on the site of bones that had been exposed by the builders. These unsightly features created in the minds of the reputable inhabitants of the lake-shore towns a wholesome repugnance to the new city. Numerous government officials increased their animosity, and the depraved court of Herod made Tiberias an impossible place for religious people. When the memory of its early history faded from the Jewish mind there appeared to be no more reasonable objec-

tions to a Jewish settlement. Its unfavourable distinction in our Lord's day no doubt accounted for the omission of this name from its history. Other towns of similar notoriety that flourished in the neighbourhood of the lake in the life-time of Jesus received similar treatment. Tarichæ, "the pickling places," a centre of fishing industry at the southern end of the lake, had a large population and an extensive trade, but no trace is left either of its name or its site. A mound called Kerak, near where the Jordan leaves the lake, represents all that man can conceive of this ancient fishing port.

Only four towns are mentioned in the New Testament besides Tiberias as existing along the coast — namely, Magdala, Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida — and they are at the other end of the water. A lake-shore road, nearly level all the way, connected them; it joined the roads to the north and south of the lake, and passed along the eastern side to Gergesa, Gamala, and the cities of the Decapolis.

About three miles northwards from Tiberias, by the water's edge, a collection of hovels forms the squalid village of Megdel with its solitary palm-tree; the site of Magdala, the home of Mary Magdalene. Beyond this insignificant hamlet the marvellously fertile plain of Gennesareth, one mile broad and three miles long, watered by three tiny streams well stocked with fish, occupies the next portion of the western shore. A strand of enchanting beauty, not more than a dozen yards wide, forms in one of these delightful spots a little bay, where myriads of tiny shells, the size of the head of a pin, glisten in the sunlight. In other places oleanders, with their crimson blossoms, fringe the shore, and dip their flowers in the rippling waves. It is impossible to penetrate with ease the tangle of plants that in their tropical luxuriance grow in this wild garden of nature. Trailing vines, no longer useful, weeds and fruits of discordant habits, mingle in this wilderness of verdure decked with the hues of many flowers.

Towards its northern borders the mountain at the west appears to have been cleft in two. Along the bottom of this

ravine, with almost perpendicular walls, emerges the road from Nazareth and Cana, and the towns of the west, on its way to the cities of the Galilean Sea, and thence to Damascus. By the northern boundary of the plain is Khan Minyeh, and Ain et Tin, a fountain very near the lake where reeds and papyrus grow abundantly. Behind the spring is the ruined khan, and on a sharp bluff appears the remains of part of a castle. Underneath, near where a town is buried, the road from the south touches the lake at an appropriate spot for a custom-house. On this ruined site, when Jesus walked from Cana, a city flourished; its walls are still visible far into the sea, which is here remarkably shallow. I have a painful cause of remembrance, having tried to swim in the sea over the stones not yet dissolved by the movement of the water. The lost city has been identified as Capernaum. Near Khan Minyeh, on the northern shore, a heap of black ruins contain what is left of a synagogue. Some of the pedestals are *in situ*. Fragments of capitals, cornices, and decorated stones, one ornamented with a pot of manna, another with bunches of grapes, are heaped together in indescribable confusion. This deserted mass on the desolate shore is Tell Hum, by many people regarded as having a better claim, chiefly on account of the ruined synagogue, to the name of old Capernaum.

In less than an hour's ride to the north, away from the sea, through prodigious thistles and wild mustard-trees, a ruin named Kerazeh, peeping out of the wilderness of weeds, has been suggested as the site of Chorazin.

Two miles and a half beyond Tell Hum the Jordan enters the Sea of Galilee; it is not very wide, and can be easily forded where it joins the lake. Across the river's mouth are the ruins of eastern Bethsaida, built by Herod Philip, the brother of Herod Antipas, and called by him Julias.

From the left bank of the Jordan the plain of Batihah, resembling Gennesareth in fertility and similar in size, reaches the high ground above the eastern coast. About six miles from the river, on the side of Wady Samakh, are the ruins of

Khersa, or Ghersa, where the hills retreat from the shore a little north of a point opposite Tiberias. From this point the slope towards the lake inclines more rapidly. Some distance from the margin of the hills, on higher ground, in a conspicuous position, are the remains of Gamala, one of the largest cities and strongest fortresses in the country. There can be little doubt that Ghersa is the Gergesa of the New Testament; its territory adjoins the country of the Gadarenes, terminating abruptly above the great gorge of the Yarmuk (Hieromax). On the other side of the valley Um Keis, Old Gadara, rests on an eminence. Turning west along the southern boundary of the lake down the valley the road from Gadara is found leading to Tarichæ.

The vivid contrast between the present and past conditions of the lake shore is unknown to the sparse inhabitants of this desolate region. Content with their poverty and wretchedness, in careless freedom they pursue their fitful toil. But to those whose memories are stored with the historic splendours of ancient days the landscape may assume in the working of their minds a very different aspect. The lonely shores of the silent sea filled with people engaged in business or pleasure. The girdle of ruins round the lake awakens into life; the bazaars, streets, and lanes of the dead cities resound with the hum of voices. On the lake-shore road, gay with bright Oriental costumes, appear once more rich and poor, men of high and low degree, soldiers and civilians, Jews and Gentiles. The mansions of the rich, the homes of the poor, synagogues, wharves, and factories for native industry, the building of boats, tanning of skins, making of pots, and an extensive trade in fish, encircled by the open-air life in the fields and on the water, present a feature altogether unknown in the Palestine of today. Merchants from east and west thronged the bazaars with their tempting wares of art and manufacture, burnished and beaten metal goods and costly fabrics. Greek architecture in cities within sight of the hills above the sea shed its glory on the simple ways of the agricultural people of the surround-

ing area. Its culture penetrated the homes of the industrial inhabitants of the towns; its temples and theatres spread their temptations over the people; its joy of life came into violent yet seductive contact with the stern discipline of the law of God. Herod's castle in Tiberias, Roman garrisons in the city by the sea, furnished the military trappings of state rule. While the produce of the lake found its way to regions remote from the confines of Israel, traders passed along the roads converging on the lake from all quarters, and helped to increase the prosperity of the Galileans; and their intercourse with the Gentiles freed them from the prejudice of their brethren in Judea.

Few people are aware of the prominence of the part this industrial centre of Galilee played in the past. If it had not been for Jesus no one would have cared. Without Him even the name of the lake would have been forgotten. He fills the pages of its history, and illustrates them with His life, and it is because of Him that men are interested in the Galilean Sea. The memories of His wondrous love that cluster in places there have consecrated those spots for ever.

The populous district by the lake, with its immense opportunities, became the centre of His Mission. From that centre the radiant light of the Kingdom of God spread its beams over the congested region. The rich in their villas away from the sea, and the poor in their quarters by the water, beheld the dawn of a brighter hope; and strangers from afar carried to their distant homes impressions of that glorious dawn. It appeared gradually, dispersing the darkness of a long night in a way never anticipated. The Galileans did not expect the new day to rise in the comparative obscurity of loving service. Their turbulent spirits looked for a Messiah who would stir into flame the embers of their national greatness.

When the fishermen who had acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah returned with Him to their city, after witnessing His miracle at Cana, they doubtless told the story of their discovery of the new hope of Israel. Little time was left for them

to make it known. Preparations were already in progress for the caravan of pilgrims to start for the Passover in Jerusalem. Insufficient accommodation in the Holy City for the immense number of pilgrims resorting thither for the great feast made it necessary for those who lived in the country districts to carry with them many things for the satisfaction of their modest needs. Besides provisions, dried fruit, olives, cheese, and bread, reeds and laths to form booths for temporary dwellings, beds for the more luxurious people, and various cooking utensils were borne either on baggage animals or on the backs of the travellers.

The chief obstacle on the journey, the only serious difficulty that had to be encountered, was the uncertain temper of the people of Samaria. If reports showed that serious opposition might be expected from them, another route was chosen. Even when the disposition of the inhabitants of the country appeared to be pacific, their suspicious eyes watched the Galilean throng as it passed through their hostile land. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans.[2] From this statement it would appear that the road through Samaria was generally avoided by the Passover caravan. The only place in the Gospels where the route is definitely mentioned indicates quite clearly that the pilgrims went by another road.[3] Reference is found in the record of the Evangelist St. Luke [4] of an attempt to pass through the enemy's country on the way to Jerusalem, an attempt that was frustrated by the refusal of the inhabitants of the border town of the permission required. On another occasion [5] it is said that Jesus "must needs go through Samaria" as if it were not the usual route. That the temper of the Samaritans was variable and their attitude hostile is shown also by Josephus, where he states that "it was the custom of the Galileans, when they came to the Holy City at the festivals, to take their journeys through the country of the Samaritans." He directs attention to the route on

[2] St. John iv. 9.
[3] St. Luke xviii. 35; St. Matt. xx. 17, 20.
[4] St. Luke ix. 53.
[5] St. John iv. 4.

a particular journey. "At this time," he writes (when "the people fought with the Galileans and killed a great number of them"), "there lay, in the road they took, a village that was called Ginea, which was situated in the limits of Samaria and the great plain." [6]

Ginea, now called Jenin, occupies a central position on the main road from north to south. While the Galileans followed other paths, they doubtless also went at times by this thoroughfare to impress their neighbours with the importance of their race and religion, willing to incur the risk of opposition for the sake of their vanity, when a sense of security arose from confidence in the strength of their company. For mutual protection the pilgrims from the towns on the lake shore joined the bands from the uplands of Galilee, and passed with the dwellers on the plain of Esdraelon in a long and formidable procession to the frontier town of Samaria.

Travelling in the first warmth of spring was exceedingly pleasant, and the prospect of the journey to Jerusalem sufficiently alluring to compensate a religious pilgrim for all the toil of the way. Sleeping at night would be no trouble to the travellers. Eastern men and women lie down in their clothes either on the bare ground in the open air, or on a padded quilt called a bed, the girdle that binds their garments together being unloosed for ease in a recumbent position. The bed is rolled up in the morning and placed with the rest of the baggage.

Slowly, even leisurely, the people tramped the dusty road without any feeling of discomfort arising from the load that had to be carried. A festival spirit stirred within them. Ram's horns were frequently blown with great skill and fervour to call them into remembrance of the object of their journey and their place of worship. The more devout members of the company sang the pilgrim psalms, "the songs of the goings up," sang them with throbbing hearts, and the swelling words passed with resounding chords down the long line of the pro-

[6] Josephus, *Ant.* Book xx. vi. 1.

cession. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go up to the House of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem," [7] With passionate longing the sincere Galileans uttered the words of the Psalmist of Israel on their annual pilgrimage. The hills around re-echoed the song of hope.

One among the crowd joined in that psalm with feelings instinctively superior to the rest of the throng. Annually for eighteen years Jesus had gone up to Jerusalem as an ordinary pilgrim. On this journey He went as the Messiah to open His public ministry in the sacred capital before the rulers of the people. With simple dignity He walked along the broad highway. When the pilgrim song died down to the beat of the pilgrim feet, He was as conscious of His mission in the comparative silence that followed as the people, in the most sublime moment of their exaltation, felt the glowing words they sang. The men who had been with Him at Cana noticed His serene composure, but they could neither fathom the depth of His heart nor comprehend the height of His purpose. Speculations about the future probably formed the subject of their conversation; expectations of further disclosures of His powers arose in their minds.

From Ginea, where the people from various parts of the northern province met together, the long line of pilgrims moved up the hill to the plain of Dothan by the numerous parallel paths that formed the road. After another ascent a broad and well-cultivated valley lay below them. Down the gradual slope, by fruitful gardens, olive groves, and orchards, guarded by the Samaritan owners from the covetous fingers of the baser elements of the pilgrim caravan, the city of Samaria was seen in the distance on an eminence above the fertile land. Along the road below the hill the Galileans went on their way to Shechem, through its narrow streets, amid the covert glances of the inhabitants, to the camping ground near Jacob's Well. One more stage of the journey would bring them into Judea.

7 Psalm cxxii.

From Jacob's Well the road on the hillside overlooked the rich plain of Samaria and the bounds of its eastern habitations. From the rising ground at the end of the track the pilgrims gazed on the distant hills of Judah; behind them mighty Hermon, with its snowy crest glistening in the sun against the deep blue sky, could be seen on the northern border of the promised land.

The road continued down a rugged steep to more level ground, with fig orchards and groves of olive trees stretching towards the wooded heights on both sides of the way, to the cornfields on the little plain of Lebonah which terminated at the foot of a giant hill with a rocky face. On the left a road went to Shiloh, the scene of Eli's shame and the place of Samuel's duty; round the base of the hill another road turned towards Judea.

A stiff climb up the mountain in front and by an easy path down its western side, the more energetic pilgrims entered an open glade at the entrance to a beautiful valley, one of the most picturesque spots in the country. In this wild ravine a copious fountain burst from the foot of a precipitous crag, tempting the heated travellers to rest in the secluded dells and shady retreats near the flowing water.

From the recesses of the woods the procession passed into an enchanting glen leading to an open space where three valleys met. By narrow paths on the side of the bed of a winter torrent the Galileans emerged from the valley known to modern travellers as the valley of the Robbers (Wady Haramyeh) to a wider landscape in Judea. Sterner looking seemed the hills in the distance than the well-clothed heights of Samaria, but a more joyous feeling stirred the multitude — the ecstasy at the thought of their destination quickened their laggard footsteps. A great panorama, beginning with the eastern view of terraced hills in the foreground receding into bare heights beyond flushed with distant blue and dark deep valleys between, unfolded a richer prospect towards the south and west of woods and groves and valleys thick with corn. The sight

of the uplands of Judah, instinct with the glory of heroic deeds, thrilled the Galileans, and from their lips the songs burst forth again. Grey stone boulders on the side of the road to Bethel impeded the progress of many feet, but no obstacle on the way could stifle the singing of the pilgrims. From Bethel down the sloping paths to Nob, though rocks made travelling difficult, the rapture of beholding the Holy City grew more intense.

Turning from the Jerusalem road towards Mount Scopus and the Mount of Olives, where Galileans camped at the Passover, soon the villas in the gardens of the northern suburbs came into sight. Gradually the glorious spectacle of the city of the Great King appeared with the Temple in its stately grandeur. The horned trumpets' blasts were heard again; the pilgrim songs were sung with ever-increasing enthusiasm. Floating on the evening breeze the sound passed down the long procession to the groups of citizens waiting to welcome their friends from the north. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for ever."[8] With full hearts they sang, as before their minds rose noble visions. For one brief moment the best that was in them triumphed.

A sensation had already been created amongst the inhabitants of the Holy City by John the Baptist's mission. Crowds of people from other lands, having heard of the movement from the dwellers in the Jewish capital, shared their anticipation in the prospect of a development of the agitation. The air was charged with rumour, and the ferment grew as the pilgrim bands from Galilee reached Jerusalem and with them the Man of Nazareth. But nothing ever seems to happen according to expectation. The people looked for outward display; their gaze being fixed in that direction, they missed the vision of an inward experience. John had declared the need of cleansed

[8] Psalm cxxv. 1–2.

hearts; Jesus came to show the need of a cleansed Temple for more spiritual worship in which the pure in heart alone could participate, and see God.

The religious rulers of the nation had no reason to complain that the people were unconcerned about the centre of the nation's life. If large congregations and good collections denote success, the rulers no doubt derived great satisfaction from their efforts to secure the attendance of the people. Crowds assembled in the Temple courts, and their money poured into the Temple coffers. Such liberty was devised that every one seemed free to act as it pleased his fancy in matters subservient to those in authority so long as no one encroached on their vested interests. The priests jealously guarded their cherished prerogatives. They alone entered the holy place, and so numerous were they that only by casting lots [9] could the turn to minister be secured.

Outside their particular domain, on the lines they had laid down, free discussion of religious topics and free education in religious affairs became a prominent feature. In the halls adjoining the Court of the Gentiles the Rabbis taught their disciples and disputed with one another over matters of "worthless subtlety." The freedom allowed to all who wished to teach enabled the Prophet of Nazareth to gather the people round Him when He subsequently visited the Holy City. The same freedom furnished the opportunity for the attacks of the rulers.

Once the way was open to satisfy the Eastern mind in its insatiable desire for argument, the world gained an entry into the Temple area. The licence allowed soon developed the instinct for business. For the convenience of the people the tables of the money-changers had been moved from the streets outside, then followed the cattle dealers with victims for sacrifice, and the sellers of doves for offerings. A throng of idle onlookers increased the crowd of interested spectators, all disposed to join in the noisy chaffering. Sounds of Oriental

[9] St. Luke i. 9.

discord filled the outer courts. The clatter of salesmen, the jarring tones of the purchasers, and the general hubbub of an Eastern bazaar, with its jostling mob and jeering boys, mocked the solemn aspect of God's Holy House. Pious Jews long exiled from their native land, returning pilgrims to the shrine of the Divine presence, found a noisy rabble and a scene of disorder, yet no one interfered; it was under the patronage of the priests doubtless satisfied with their tolerance. The world was let loose in the Temple courts.

Moved with indignation, into the midst of the multitude the Man of Nazareth stepped. Seizing a number of small cords that formed part of the litter on the marble pavement, He twisted them into a scourge and hastily drove the cattle out of the court. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves, solemnly commanded them to take these things hence, and said, "Make not My Father's House a house of merchandise." His air of authority and His lofty courage carried all before Him; all antagonism was subdued; no one refused to obey. Great must have been the consternation of the officers, and the surprise of the people. "The Lord had suddenly come to His Holy Temple." [10]

Some of the rulers may have remembered the Boy from Nazareth Who eighteen years before had impressed them with His remarkable knowledge and His distinguished claim that God was His Father. With this claim before them the significance of His act ought to have been apparent from the proceedings of the people. He cleansed the courts of His Father's House as they cleansed their homes in the preparation for the Passover, according to God's commandment (Exod. xii. 5. "Ye shall put away leaven out of your houses").

That no attempt was made to arrest Him is evidence of His power. This was perhaps the most surprising feature of the attitude of the rulers; that they should let Him alone. Nothing more amazing can be conceived than their abstention from violence towards Jesus. Something in Him checked them.

[10] Malachi iii. 1.

For a moment, as He stood before them, they hesitated, not knowing what to do. Awakening wonder at the assumption of such authority no doubt stirred new thoughts within them. Who could this Man be Who dared to interfere with the customs of the people sanctioned by the priests, that treated with contempt the rulers of the Temple? So eagerly had they looked for the Messiah, they may have thought that perhaps He Who had appeared in so strange and startling a manner might be their long-expected King. No one had a definite idea of what the Messiah would be like, nor exactly what He would do. The rulers certainly never imagined that their ways would meet with His disapproval. They expected Him to do what they were unable to achieve, not undo what they had accomplished. They hoped for great things, a great kingdom, a great nation, something that would give great joy without great effort. Life was hard as well as joyless in Jerusalem; uncertainty made it so — not merely uncertainty about the Messiah, but a misconception of God, of His nature and His purpose, and disappointment in the delay of Jewish emancipation.

The rulers could not conceive God independently of their forms and ceremonies; they could not see Him because of them. They could not see the forest for the trees. The spirit of discernment had gone, and with it the joy of living had departed. All that was left for them, the cold satisfaction of the rigid observance of their laws, and the distinction gained by the exercise of their power, scarcely eased the bitterness arising from the pressure of Roman dominion.

Fearing that the people might regard the Prophet of Nazareth as a man sent from God, and see in His action a rebuke for them, the rulers consulted together in order to prevent any movement that might imperil their cause and destroy their power. Unwilling to accept the Galilean on the evidence before them, which hurt their consciences, they were not altogether disposed to ignore His deed; they could not ignore the Man, and they were apparently afraid to arrest Him. Ex-

treme caution seemed necessary to deal with a Person of such wonderful power; they decided to ask for a sign that warranted His action. It was more than a way of excusing themselves, this infirm venture of a protest, more than a slight assumption of complaint against His proceedings. Beneath the evidence of perplexity an uncomfortable feeling suggested that something more than they could understand moved the sublime Figure before them. Their feeble request exhibited their powerless condition. They said, "What sign showest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things?" [11] The character of His action was an answer to their question; no other sign could be given that would satisfy them. If their hearts had been fixed on God the rulers could not have failed to receive Him; if they had been faithfully engaged in the study of God's Word they would have seen the prophecy of Malachi fulfilled.[12] He answered their question by saying, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up." [13] When He uttered these words He would doubtless have moved His hand towards His body, action would have accompanied His speech in the customary manner of Eastern men. The rulers thought only of the Temple and its courts, the representation on earth of the dwelling-place of God, and not the shrine of the Divine presence, the body of the Man before them. Having no reverence for the one in which they professed to worship, they had lost all spiritual perception in their failure to recognize the Divine presence in the other. His words appeared to their disordered minds like an idle boast; and such an answer to their question a contemptuous method of treating a serious subject; and later, when the opposition of the rulers became intense, and they hated Him, His words were used against Him. They replied, "Forty and six years was this Temple in building, and wilt Thou rear it up in three days?" [14]

At the outset of His Mission Jesus was misunderstood, His

[11] St. John ii. 18.
[12] Mal. iii. 1–3.
[13] St. John ii. 19.
[14] St. John ii. 20.

action misinterpreted. The fact that He was so misunderstood is a tribute to His greatness. All greatness is mysterious, even provoking and baffling. The condemnation which Jesus has laid upon the men of the world who will not believe on Him is to force them to explain Him. Men do not misinterpret the speech and actions of their fellow-men when they move on the same levels. It is when one is immeasurably above them that they cannot comprehend his words and ways; then men are perplexed, either because of their imperfect knowledge of him, or by the strange contradiction of his character.

Jesus is perfectly transparent and perfectly consistent; His life is open for men to gain a free entry into His mind and heart. It is the moral and spiritual elevation of His character that rests in the awful loneliness of its sublime height. Men cannot reach its lofty summit to search out the secret of His greatness. Yet simple men have seen there a beauty surpassing all human thought, beyond all human imagination; something altogether lovely; and great men of the earth have bowed in humble reverence before the supreme grandeur of the character of Jesus.

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW BIRTH

The first public act of Jesus in Jerusalem was the cleansing of the Temple courts; His first public statement related to the destruction of the Temple of His body by the defilers of the Temple of God.

When He was risen from the dead His disciples remembered His saying and believed on His word.[1] Their eyes were opened to the wondrous beauty of His sacrifice and the marvellous power of their risen Lord. The selfish interest in the rulers of the Temple shut out the light of truth; in their prejudice they refused to consider the wonder of His work, His work of unveiling the Kingdom into which no man could enter with heart uncleansed.

Other works were accomplished while He was in Jerusalem, and many of the people at the Passover believed in Him when they saw the miracles that He did,[2] believed in Him as a Man from God; others were startled by the profound impression His works had made, but they hesitated to accept Him as the Messiah. They admitted there was something more in Him than they had seen before, and it touched them. One of their rulers, a member of the Sanhedrin, a teacher of Israel, had been so moved by the Young Reformer. Cautious on account of his position, timid in his method of approach, with a dim foreshadowing of a greatness he could not comprehend, he came to Jesus by night. From his stately mansion in the city, by the light of the Passover moon, the ruler threaded his way through the dense crowd of transitory dwelling-places on the slopes of Olivet to the temporary abode of Jesus. In the courtesy of Oriental language he addressed Him in the hope of receiving some assurance that he was right in assuming

[1] St. John ii. 22. [2] St. John ii. 23.

His works were the signs that He had come from God.[3] He accosted Him as if he had been the deputy of a party representing the current opinion of the people; and the collective form of his opening remarks has led some men to believe he was sent by the Sanhedrin to prepare conditions of an agreement on which they might appeal to the nation.

Our Lord answered him in the plural number,[4] because it was the most suitable reply for the occasion. Nicodemus had identified himself with his associates; Jesus followed his lead and answered in the corporate capacity of Himself and His followers. He invariably dealt with men who were sincere in their desire for knowledge by taking His stand with them on their platform, on the basis of a mutual understanding from whence, if they were willing, He might lift them into the higher plane of His own life. Even when they hesitated their reluctance was not due to His teaching, but to their lack of appreciation. Having met Nicodemus on the ground of his appeal as a member of a community, He proceeded to reveal to him the fact of individual responsibility.[5] The personal life of a Jew was absorbed in the race; the man was a part of the people; his religion was national; he believed all the promises of God were for the commonwealth, and every member of it was, by the nature of his position, a recipient. Christ came to teach the value of the individual soul, to proclaim a tremendous change as the necessary condition for recognizing it; that without this new movement, which He termed being born again, no one could participate in the true privileges of God's children. Man must be separated from his people, and in his own person realize the fundamental moral principles of the new life, and become convinced by his own vision of its reality, before he could enter into it.

From the inference which Nicodemus drew concerning Christ's miracles,[6] he was silently brought back to the common truth about earthly things which men may observe with-

[3] St. John iii. 2.
[4] St. John iii. 11.
[5] St. John iii. 3.
[6] St. John iii. 2.

out revelation, before he could see the heavenly things unveiled by the Holy Spirit; to the baptism by water in which Gentiles were admitted as new-born babes into the Jewish faith, familiar to Nicodemus as representing the cleansing of the life from the defilement of heathenism and its dedication to the service of God. He must have known, as a member of the Sanhedrin, John the Baptist's declaration, "I indeed baptize you with water. . . . He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost";[7] that this new baptism was meant for all, both Jews and Gentiles; that it portrayed something more than the old Jewish ordinance, and stood for something new, a new life in a new Kingdom. Nicodemus, hard pressed by the condition of admission, indicated its impossibility by a further question, "How can a man be born when he is old?"[8] He could not see how the spiritual life was to be renewed without the natural life, when both grow together from the beginning; and, as the bodily form cannot be altered when it is old, neither can the spirit return and develop into a new and holier life. The ruler still spoke as a son of the favoured nation, with thoughts of Israel's heritage clouding his mind and veiling his spirit. He was unwilling to admit the necessity for a Jew to be on the same level as a Gentile. If being born again was the condition of entering the Kingdom, then no one, he thought, would ever enter it. The young spirit might see it, but the old man with his life behind him, an irrevocable past which cannot change, had no hope.

The difficulty was removed by a clearer exposition of the principle of the new birth, as the work of a power unseen, like the wind, the operating force of the Holy Spirit, His spirituality rather than his personality, imparting to the life by which the Spirit moves a new vigour and a new vision. As the body immersed in water partakes of that element and a change is made by washing, it is the symbol of the transition into the new life, it is the outward form of the inward action of the Holy Spirit cleansing the old life into the new birth.

[7] St. Luke iii. 16. [8] St. John iii. 4.

However mysterious this may be, it is not impossible; when the Holy Spirit enters into the life of a man a consciousness of Divine fellowship follows, he knows that a new relationship has been discovered by some mysterious process which he has experienced, his spiritual sight beholds something new, and this is termed the new birth. He sees a new life unfolded before him, and it grows as he receives the current of Divine energy proceeding from the source of his being, the Infinite and Eternal God, Whose Kingdom has been established within him.

Nicodemus wonderingly asked, "How can these things be?" And Jesus answered, "Art thou a teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?" [9]— the outward form of the new birth, the sphere of action of which is on the earth; how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things, where the spiritual life is more fully developed? No man has ascended up into heaven to bring the truth down but the Son of Man to Whom it was given, and by Whom it is declared.

Further conversation followed relating to the love of God for man, its universal appeal, and the solemn responsibility on all who hear it. Other truths were enunciated pertaining to the Passion of Jesus, and the prospect of life eternal, before the company retired to rest; and Nicodemus went forth into the night, as silently and secretly as he entered Christ's presence, with the Spirit's breath about him, enveloping his own timid spirit; but not until Jesus was lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, was the old man fully conscious of the new birth. He had learned that the individual soul, depending on its natural existence, could be lifted into a new Kingdom independent of the nation, a separate entity conscious of another life, and he showed the dawn of his better understanding when he subsequently stood before the Sanhedrin, a solitary figure, differing from his associates in his desire for justice for Jesus.[10] He came again to Jesus, when the fickle multitude had despised and rejected Him and He was nailed to the cross, bringing the spices for His burial that belong

[9] St. John iii. 9–13.

[10] St. John vii. 50, 51.

to the truly great,[11] so that he might honour Him as King when His kingly state was the mockery of the people. And there he entered into the new Kingdom, roused into a new life, which involved the severance of old ties, a stepping out of the old paths. Out of weakness he was made strong, out of darkness he came into light, into the knowledge of the truth which had made him free.

After the Feast Jesus and His disciples left Jerusalem and went into Judea, and there He tarried with them. We have no guide to His movements beyond the statement that His disciples baptized.[12] It is, however, sufficient to direct us to the place, as the only one available for the purpose in Judea was in the wild region beyond Anathoth and near to Michmash, on the border of the barren wilderness of hills which overlook the Jordan Plain. There in the bottom of the valley, about ten miles from Jerusalem to the north-east, flows a copious spring in a natural basin, now known as Ain Farah.[13]

In the announcement that John was baptizing at Ænon, near to Salim, because of "much water," there is an indication of the time of the year. Before the hot summer there is "much water" in many places. Perennial streams flow into the Jordan from both sides, and many springs and pools are seen in various parts of the country. The streams are gradually reduced in size, the springs emit a feeble flow, and the pools dry up when the hot weather approaches. "Much water" in a place is thus a very distinguished feature, and its reference to Ænon denotes a scanty supply elsewhere, and in both places identified by the name Ænon — *i.e.* Springs — there is much water in summer, more at the Ænon[14] in the

[11] St. John xix. 39; 2 Chron. xvi. 14. [12] St. John iii. 22, 23; iv. 1, 2.

[13] The boys in the school in Jerusalem where I was Head Master were taught to swim in the pool formed by the spring, and they used it throughout the summer as their bathing-place. It is the source of the Kelt, traditionally known as the brook Cherith, and though the spring is called Ain Farah it is distinct from the wady of the same name north of Nablous (Shechem).

[14] The only reason for refusing to accept this site is its locale in Samaria. This is certainly an argument against it, but not strong enough to

Samaritan hills near the Jordan Valley than its rival site nearer Scythopolis.

This indirect allusion to the season of the year in the absence of any definite statement regarding the length of time Jesus spent in Judea, is very serviceable, and the proximity of Ænon in Samaria to the springs in the hill country of Judea enables us to understand more easily how the common rumours passed between the people and the priests [15] and the followers of the two Preachers. It would not be very difficult for Jews from Judea to visit John and dispute with his disciples about purifying,[16] and they would be more eager for the enterprise, if he had entered their enemy's territory, in order to uphold their own views against the Baptist's new methods.

Meanwhile, crowds listened to the teaching of Jesus, and His disciples were busily engaged in their new vocation; even the priests in Jerusalem heard they baptized more disciples than John. Elements of discord were prepared in the usual manner of reporting success, by way of comparison, through candid friends or sympathizing followers. But they failed to kindle in John the flame of professional jealousy. He heard their statements that, like iron, would have entered other men's souls, heard them unmoved, save by the lofty thoughts he uttered in noble words. No complaint escaped his lips when the usual disturbers of peace, remembering his great following, reported the increasing popularity of Jesus. Again he declared,[17] "Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but I am sent before Him. He must increase, and I must decrease." These words mark the true hero in human life. Facing his destiny with indomitable courage, he calmly and resolutely acknowledged the greater claim of Jesus, and

discard it altogether, because the springs are in the hills bordering the Jordan Valley and remote from the populous region of the country. John, as a preacher antagonistic to the hierarchy in Jerusalem, would not therefore be unwelcome. The great heat of the Jordan Valley in the summer where the other springs are situated is a much stronger reason for a retreat to the Samaritan hills than any argument against it.

[15] St. John iv. 1. [16] St. John iii. 25. [17] St. John iii. 28, 29, 30.

willingly effaced himself that all honour might be offered to Him.

Soon afterwards he was seized by Herod Antipas and cast into prison. The tyrant was smarting under the denunciation of the Prophet, and, being unable to stifle his words, he disposed of his body. Herod was not altogether vile; though cruel, crafty and immoral, he had heard John gladly. Beneath the pile of evil that almost buried the good within him was something that could be touched; but an evil genius presided over him. His brother's wife, with whom he lived, controlled his spirit, and though he may have tried to free himself when stirred by John's stern voice and his biting words, his feeble attempts were transitory and vain. As one of the three sons of Herod the Great, he had little good to expect from his heritage. He received part of his father's kingdom as Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, and many of his vices. His brother Philip became Tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis, another half-brother of the same name resided as a private gentleman in Rome. Herod, the Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, whose country bordered on Arabia, married the daughter of Aretas, its king, a political union that secured peace on his border but brought no peace to his home. After a period of wretchedness due chiefly to his profligate life, he saw and was enamoured of his brother Philip's wife when he visited Rome. She encouraged his advances, and succeeded in inducing him to divorce his wife and marry her. This infamous union John denounced; his righteous indignation turned Herod's heart against him, and the woman Herodias, whom the Tetrarch had married, became his bitter enemy.

Meanwhile, Jesus in Judea was constrained to leave for Galilee, and "He must needs go through Samaria."[18] He probably travelled by the path along the valley to the west of Michmash, and starting, according to Eastern custom, early in the morning, He would reach Jacob's well at noon. The ordinary route from Judea to Galilee was the way to avoid

[18] St. John iv. 4.

Samaria. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans,[19] their hostility made a journey through their country unpleasant and uncomfortable, so the easy road was chosen by the wayfarer to escape from these disagreeable people. But there were times and occasions, though few in number, when it became necessary to take the more direct and the shorter road, and pass through their inhospitable country.[20] They were usually those relating to the feasts in Jerusalem, when the presence of the Galileans was required in the Temple for their observance; then the people from the north travelled in companies for mutual comfort and protection. The need for Jesus to go through Samaria was not His own, nor His own convenience. It was for the need of the people, and the opportunity awaiting Him there, that He undertook the journey which forced Him to leave the common way and venture along the harder road, with its threatening storm of hostile feeling.

The influence of John the Baptist's mission had penetrated the land, his work on the banks of the river was close to its border, and Ænon within; and John had been arrested, was now a prisoner in the hands of Herod; his followers, no doubt dismayed, were probably scattered. They needed support and consolation, and thus the presence of Jesus was necessary for them also.

On His arrival at Jacob's well, He sat on the stone at the side, hungry, and thirsty, and weary, while His disciples went into the city to purchase food. As He rested there a woman of Samaria, with an unworthy past and dubious present, came from Sychar to draw water. Something unusual had caused her to leave her house at noon to fetch it from a distance, as there were springs in Sychar [21] and plenty of flowing water nearer home. In the East some of the wells [22] have a reputa-

19 St. John iv. 9.

20 Josephus, *Ant.* Book XX. chap. vi. 1.

21 Modern Eskar.

22 In Palestine water is of such importance and value — in many places equal almost to life itself to its inhabitants — that qualities are attributed to it which cannot be recognized by people unacquainted with their view of life. The customary courteous remark of a native traveller on receiv-

tion from their association with a person or event which exaggerates their importance. The water in Jacob's well was not so good as the water in Sychar, but its reputation was better, and that was an attraction. There is no site in the Holy Land more certain than Jacob's well.[23] Jacob's independent spirit urged him to buy a parcel of ground and dig a well to provide water for his family, so that none would be required from the surrounding people. The Samaritan woman sought external aid because of the unsatisfying conditions of her own place. Her solitary appearance at the unusual hour for drawing water was not due to her mode of life and sense of shame, the fear of meeting other women who might cause her to realize her condition. She afterwards went amongst them with the joyful news of her salvation, and a message for them to taste and see. It was the restless desire for something outside herself, beyond her own sphere, her superstitious idea of the value of water in Jacob's well; and her frame of mind furnished the opportunity for the Giver of life eternal. He asked her for a drink of water to quench His own natural thirst, and she, having recognized Him as a Jew by His dress, expressed her surprise at His request; thus the conversation began that was fraught with so much blessing. He knew her need and led her to her own discovery. Before He could present His wondrous gift the ground of her heart had to be prepared to receive it, the well had to be dug in her soul.

Jacob dug his well[24] for an independent supply of water; so other men who can afford it dig below the foundation of the house they intend to build for a well within, and when the structure is complete the flat roof collects the rain, pipes and channels carry it down to the well beneath, and the owner is

ing a drink of water is, "This water is better than the water in my country or in my village," in his heart believing the reverse.

2 Sam. xxiii. 15. David says, "O that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem!" and his men broke through the lines of the Philistine army to fetch it.

[23] St. John iv. 5.

[24] φρέαρ in St. John iv. 11 is "well"; in St. Luke φρέαρ is "pit"; Rev. ix. 1, "pit."

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw

John IV: 15

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor

Luke IV: 18

no longer dependent on his external circumstances. Rain may fall at the same time on a dwelling unprepared to receive it, and it runs off the roof and is lost in the earth. The occupier is forced to rely on others outside his home for supplying the need of his household. The gracious rain from heaven falls alike on the just and the unjust; the attitude of the former is that of a recipient, his upward look and internal preparation express his desire for reception, and his satisfaction arises from within, through the water of life God has supplied in his well. Before the water can be given the well must be dug, and the attitude formed. This preparatory process was followed by our Lord in His treatment of the woman before Him. She knew the value of the well in the home; she was aware of the attraction of Jacob's well, of her attempts to quench desire by earthly means that never satisfy, only postpone. Her idea of situation was further shown in her reference to the place for worship, one spot more holy than another for reverent men, the mountain above her with its steep ascent and toilsome way, which had long been worn by the weary feet of those who climbed to its summit for intercourse with God. It is still the only place for the Samaritan Passover. In Jerusalem, she admitted, was the place where the Jews said men ought to worship.[25] Again our Lord turned her thoughts from the outward to the inward, from the place without to the spirit within, and declared that in spirit alone could true worship be offered. He said "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."[26] He thus fixed for ever the essential principle of worship. The human spirit being the link between human nature and Divine, it must be sanctified by the presence of the Holy Spirit before the union is complete for true worship. Then only can the spirit blend in true harmony with the Divine nature, and true service be rendered to God. In response to her awakening soul and desire for knowledge Jesus revealed Himself as the Messiah. At first she thought He was a Prophet with the prophetic in-

[25] St. John iv. 20. [26] St. John iv. 24.

sight; her mind then conceived the thought of the Christ. She spake of His coming, and said, "When He is come, He will tell us all things." [27] She is now certain, and in her the eternal fountain is opened and the living power supplied. Born again of the Spirit, she left her water-pot, eager to make known her discovery to the people amongst whom she lived. Meanwhile, the disciples had returned with food, and marvelled that their Master talked with a woman,[28] yet they made no remark, content with their belief that He did all things well. They pressed Him to eat, and received in reply a sublime but perplexing answer, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of. . . . My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." [29] Here, as in His temptation, He recognizes the Giver of food as His support and not the food itself. He directs their thoughts towards a fuller disclosure of His work in the spiritual harvest of the world already begun in the woman who had gone to call her friends and neighbours, and, as she returned with them, the sowing and the reaping appeared together. "Say ye not," He said, "there are yet four months and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are already white to harvest." [30] In that harvest was His joy, the hidden source of Divine food

[27] St. John iv. 25. [28] St. John iv. 27. [29] St. John iv. 32, 34.

[30] St. John iv. 35: οὐχ ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι = "Are ye not accustomed to say" ("say ye not") points to some unrecorded saying of the people in the district from whence the disciples came. Four months is the time between the seed-time and the harvest in the fruitful soil of the lowlands on the west side of the Sea of Galilee: in the highlands of the country it is nearer six.

There are many local proverbs in Palestine found only in particular districts that do not apply elsewhere.

A real difficulty consists in furnishing an exact chronological date to our Lord's visits to Jacob's well. His reference to sowing and reaping appears to indicate the season, but which of them is not easy to determine. Whether it was seed-time or harvest depends on the length of his stay in Judea, and that cannot be ascertained. In all probability it was the saying that formed the basis of His remarks, in which is found both the sowing and the reaping, and it is even more probable when the rest of His statement respecting the future is duly considered. His visit to Samaria was therefore neither seed-time nor harvest, but in the summer, and this season is the more likely from the reference to water at Ænon.

which all men will receive as the wages of spiritual industry. "Herein is that saying true, One soweth and another reapeth."[31] He is the Sower, and all others are in some way reapers, having received in themselves the living seed, the power of the Spirit, and with Him become, like Him, sowers as well as reapers.

For two days Jesus remained with the Samaritans, many of whom believed on His word, first on the evidence of the woman in whom the new life was manifest, then by the deeper and stronger proof of personal conviction. The sowing and the reaping of the two days in Samaria, this revival in Sychar, and the hospitality given to Jesus by people who accepted His message and received His gift for their future welfare, is a welcome contrast to His rejection by the people of His own home.

[31] St. John iv. 37.

CHAPTER X

THE RETURN TO GALILEE

The sequence of events is now somewhat obscure. Whether Jesus went direct to Nazareth or first to Cana cannot be accurately determined. His movements formed the preliminary part of His Mission, and were all antecedent to the final call of His disciples to join Him in carrying out the great purpose of His life.

There are two roads into Galilee from Jacob's well: the one traversed by tourists through Nablous, ancient Shechem, enclosed in a narrow valley by two lofty mountains, Ebal on the north and Gerizim on the south, is the central highway of the country; the other is a less important road, with little interest for modern travellers. If Jesus had intended to go by the main road through the most populous parts of the land, which is very improbable, His journey would have led Him into the city of Shechem; but He sent His disciples to buy food while He rested at Jacob's well some distance from the city, and then remained by invitation two days with the Samaritans of Sychar. After His declaration of His Messiahship, and the revival in Sychar, He would have an additional reason for avoiding the principal road in the country. His progress through the cities might have invited a public demonstration, and His future work in Jewry have been prejudiced by Samaritan favour.

The more direct road from Sychar to Galilee, and the one by which Jesus was less likely to attract the attention of the mass of people in the more thickly populated part of the country, leaves Mount Ebal on the left, at right angles through the road to Shechem; it winds along Wady Seilun, gradually rising to the hills by the rugged path to Tubas (ancient Thebez). This picturesque route, now a stony track with signs

of an old road appearing in patches, leads to the head of Wady Farah and the pool of Ainun (*i.e.* the springs, Ænon). As I stood by the glittering water formed by copious springs in the sunlight of a hot summer day, it was easy to set forth in the mind the crowds that resorted to John's baptism, to picture an assembly in this natural amphitheatre, on one side of the pool a level space and shadowed hills on the other.

The highway from Shechem, by Sychar to the ford near Bethabara and to Scythopolis, the Decapolitan city in the plain by the river, afterwards paved by the Romans, whose work is still to be seen, passed near the pleasant waters. Mountain paths led from this ancient road to the rich and uncultivated lands of the Jordan Valley, to unimportant Jordan fords at present known only to the few poor tent-dwellers below the hills. No traces are found of Samaritan towns on the receding heights east of the righ-road; the ancient strongholds of Bezek, Tirzah, and Thebez guarded the passes.

In this sparsely populated region no barrier either of Samaritan strife or Samaritan prejudice would keep the great preacher of repentance from the waters of Ænon. His message, so different from the expression of the Jewish thought of the time, would be more likely to impress the Samaritans who heard him than provoke their displeasure because he was a Jew. Not many years later Philip the Evangelist found willing ears among the Samaritan people.[1]

The last recorded scene of John the Baptist's labours was laid in this district. After he was taken by Herod to the dungeon of his desert fortress, John's disciples may have lingered in those summer days near the place where their master baptized, in the vain hope of his return. Jesus passed that way. Some of His followers had been the disciples of the Baptist; He had an interest in all the disciples, and also in John, and this probably accounted partly for His journey through Samaria. No incident is related on the road from Samaria to Galilee, beyond a slight reference to His reception by the Gali-

[1] Acts viii, 5.

leans,[2] who had seen the things that He did at the Passover.

When He reached the valley of Jezreel His disciples separated from Him to go to their own homes, with thoughts in their minds of developments in the uncertain future. Jesus walked on alone to His destination over the little hill of Hermon; He was now within reach of His old home and amongst the people with whom He was acquainted. Every one that met Him, by the fleeting glance of surprise in their greeting, betrayed awakening interest, and the people of Nain would scarcely let Him pass without some form of recognition of the change discovered in the Carpenter of Nazareth.

He walked again up the dusty hillside road to His native village, but everything was different. Familiar objects recalled the past; but it was not with the past He had to deal, it was the future. Thoughts about the future surged within Him. His arrival in Nazareth must have been a great event in the village history. Some discerning souls see more clearly, with a greater sense of proportion, and they may have noticed beneath the habitual reserve of Jesus when He dwelt amongst them the sign of a greater future: some with whom He had conversed, whose powers of observation were more acute, had doubtless perceived the promise. They would offer Him a welcome without perhaps realizing what was meant by His power, and with no thought of the stupendous claim He was about to make before them.

Every town had a synagogue, and every village that could muster ten Jews of full age to form the congregation. A lofty site was usually selected, and if possible near flowing water for the ablutions ordered by the authorities. The features which influenced the choice of a site enable us to locate with tolerable accuracy the position of the synagogue of Nazareth. As only one fountain springs from the earth, the high ground above it naturally suggests the most desirable situation. Being in the direction of "the brow of the hill whereon the city was built," [3] the proximity of a steep descent offered the means

[2] St. John iv. 45.

[3] St. Luke iv. 29.

the people required to put into execution their will to destroy Him on Whom their anger afterwards burst in a fury; its situation also represents the possibility of passing through the people on His way to Cana without again entering Nazareth.

Remains of the ancient synagogues of Galilee show how limited must have been the architectural designs of their builders. Nothing better than a rectangular structure could be erected, with a profusion of ornamentation on the portico of vine-leaves and grapes, and sometimes a pot of manna.

The internal arrangements followed the pattern of the Temple in Jerusalem. At the end of the synagogue a chest, representing the ark contained the Holy Scriptures, the scrolls of the law and the prophets. Before the ark hung a rich veil. Near it was a chair on a raised platform for the Chazzan, the reader; special places for the rulers; and in the body of the synagogue were seats for the congregation, consisting solely of men. The Shammah (sacristan) had charge of the sacred writings; elders formed a council with a president, the chief ruler of the synagogue, at the head of affairs; and deputies for conducting the correspondence. The rulers possessed great power over the community, of which the synagogue was the centre; their resolutions had the force of law; they ordained punishments, excommunication being the most severe, and the Chazzan was the executive officer. Such an institution kept alive the national spirit, and the liberty allowed in the assembly stimulated the activity of mind which has been always characteristic of the Jews.

As there were no priests outside Jerusalem a recognized Reader, the Chazzan, ministered in the assembly; but any one might be invited to occupy his place, read the lessons from the law and the prophets, and add a personal commentary expressing his own opinions. A man of good repute was welcomed, and his address appreciated, particularly when it agreed with the ideas of the congregation. That Jesus was so often permitted to speak was a sign of His great reputation, and the

synagogue offered him a great opportunity.[4] Until He became recognized as a Reformer the people gladly listened to His words: it was after He had healed the paralytic man to show that He had the power to forgive sins that the rulers of the synagogues opposed Him.

The congregation in the synagogue had a right to question the speaker, raise objections to His remarks, and discuss them freely. Animated debates often followed the statements of the preachers; passion spent itself in verbal warfare. The liberty accorded to every one to become a reader and a speaker provided the opening that most men covet for propagating their own ideas. This marvellous facility of free speech offered an opportunity for Jesus to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God, and to instruct the people in His new doctrines.

On the Sabbath Day He went into the synagogue at Nazareth, the full tide of the Holy Spirit flowed over Him, and, though the dull and monotonous service of the village fathers was no longer congenial, He did not set up a new place of His own to preach the glad tidings He came to proclaim.[5] Under its shadow He had been taught to read the Scriptures. Within its walls were many sacred associations, and memories of earlier days flitted across His mind. His heart was moved with very tender feelings, for He was human too. When the Divine Man stood before the assembly in the place He had often occupied before, He unrolled the scroll of sacred writings, slowly and deliberately read the first and second verses of the sixty-first chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah, then rolled up the parchment, handed it to the servant of the synagogue, and sat down to deliver His sermon. Every eye was fixed on Him; in eager expectation the congregation were prepared to listen. As He unfolded the meaning of the passage of Scripture in its relation to Himself, murmurs of dissatisfaction followed the first feeling of astonishment in the people, and audible references to His origin displayed their annoyance.

[4] St. Luke iv. 14, 15.

[5] St. Luke iv. 16.

That He Whom they had known as the Carpenter should proclaim Himself Messiah, and assert His claim to the prophecy of Isaiah being fulfilled in Him was more than they could bear with reason. He had not even the training of a Rabbi, and yet He ventured to assume the dignity and position of the One they expected to restore the land and nation. He ignored their outburst of rebellious feeling and calmly went on with His address, noticing in its course what appeared to be the desire of their hearts, that He should in some way vindicate His claim. He knew they had in their minds the proverb, "Physician, heal thyself," used in another form as a taunt when He was hanging on the cross.[6] He reminded them of the depreciation of the message and work of the prophets of old on account of the unbelief of the people: that "many widows were in the land of Israel in the days of Elijah, but unto none of them was he sent save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow";[7] that "many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha, and none of them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian."[8]

At this humiliating comparison their jealousy turned to hatred; their dissent and dissatisfaction, hitherto expressed in subdued tones, rose to a pitch of fury; they turned on Him in their wrath and thrust Him out of their village. The crowd pressed hard on Him until they reached the top of the hill, where they determined to compass His destruction by pushing Him over one of the precipitous rocks, but the calm assurance in His presence, and the majesty of His Person, checked their infamous purpose. "He passed through the midst of them and went His way."[9]

Driven from the home of His childhood by the people who had seen Him grow in their midst to man's estate, He walked towards Cana, where He had converted water into wine. Forward into the development of His purpose, He lifted His face heroically through trial and disappointment. Not a murmur

[6] St. Luke xxiii. 35.
[7] St. Luke iv. 25, 26.
[8] St. Luke iv. 27.
[9] St. Luke iv. 30.

escaped His lips; He thought only of the stern fact, common to all endeavour, that "a prophet is not without honour save in his own country"; He thought more of the naturalness of their proceedings than their spirit of hostility towards Him, of the world's treatment of goodness and its own waywardness.

The rumour of His visit to Cana reached the court of Herod Antipas. During His stay with friends in this little Galilean town, a man of distinguished position, a nobleman [10] in the Tetrarch's service, arrived in haste to see Him, with an urgent request for Him to come to Capernaum and heal his son, who was at the point of death. The answer Jesus gave him was strange and perplexing. "Except ye see signs [11] and wonders," [11] He said, "ye will not believe." [12]

The courtier's appeal seemed to harmonize with the prevailing desire of the people who had seen and heard of His works, and Jesus tested him; He endeavoured to make him understand the real basis of his own faith, and see whether it was in Jesus Himself, or only in the signs and wonders that He wrought; and something was revealed to the nobleman of Capernaum besides the craving for his son's restoration to health. It was evident when the rebuff he had received passed without notice. His request, "Sir, come down ere my child die," was repeated with such confidence in Jesus that there was no doubt about the nobleman's faith. No sign was given him; he was simply told to go, and Jesus said, "Thy son liveth."

The man believed His word and went home satisfied. In the morning, as he was returning to Capernaum, his servants met him on the road with the joyful news. He asked them when his son began to recover, and they replied, "Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him." The faith of the father,

[10] St. John iv. 46: nobleman = *βασιλικός*. Josephus uses this term to distinguish the soldiers or courtiers or officers of other kings from those of Rome.

[11] *σημεῖα* = signs, the ordinary word for miracles. *τέρατα* = wonders, rarely used in the Gospels, derived from a sense of astonishment the miracles caused.

[12] St. John iv. 48.

begotten in his need, was strengthened by this assurance, and it spread through his whole house.

Although we may not be sure of the name of the courtier, we know from this narrative that the rich as well as the poor believed on Jesus. The wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, ministered unto Him of her substance,[13] and Manaen,[14] "who had been brought up with Herod," was a believer; but whether the courtier was Chuza, or Manaen, or some other officer, we cannot tell.

From Cana Jesus went down to Capernaum, in the future known as His own city, which He had already selected as the most suitable centre for His work. His sisters were probably married and remained in Nazareth. His mother and His brethren had moved to Capernaum after the first miracle at Cana, perhaps only for a change, but their abode was not for Him. He had no home. Earthly ties of kinship, though unsevered, became less noticeable, and, as His life's purpose forbade a permanent settlement, a temporary shelter was found in the homes of His friends and the guest-chambers of the people. There was not yet the close attachment which drew His first disciples from their occupation: no definite call had been given them to leave their work. Jesus moved about the country apparently alone, in a quiet, unostentatious way attracting attention by His demeanour as well as by His deeds of kindness. The charm of His manner, and His method of teaching, fascinated the inhabitants. He took their simple language and set it before them illumined by His Spirit. He presented to them living pictures as He taught them living truths; He gave them seed-thoughts to lie in their hearts and germinate for a future harvest. The objects of the countryside, the flowers of the field, the birds of the air, the apparently insignificant things of every-day life, assumed an importance beyond all previous knowledge. Jesus touched old things and they became for ever new.

The common people heard Him gladly. From village to

[13] St. Luke viii. 3. [14] Acts xiii. 1.

village the news of this amazing Teacher swiftly spread. At His approach men and women left their work for days together, heedless of any discomfort, if they might but listen to Him. He introduced with His teaching the grace of compassion into the world. A new joy came with His message; its discovery thrilled the people; it roused in the populace an enthusiasm which eventually displeased the rulers. The people saw they were never treated without consideration for their feelings, a proof of His love for them. They were not mere tools in His hands for use, nor parts of an organization to be managed. He had an instinctive care for them; He had a personal interest in them. Beneath the surface of their life Jesus saw what no one else had discovered: the possibility of freedom, of a liberty greater than any one in the nation had ever dreamed. The people suffered from the worst kind of slavery: that which puts fetters on the mind of man and confines the noblest powers within him by the bonds of rule which compel men to think and believe, and do, not what is right, but what is in accord with set forms and fixed laws.

The rulers, having no personal interest in individuals, forsook the masses in despair at their inability to deal with them. They had given them laws, and, when laws failed to satisfy the people, the rulers had nothing further to offer them than more laws.

There was the germ of freedom in the way that Jesus behaved to all who approached Him. All distinctions vanished in His presence, and men were treated with respect because they were men. He showed them, by His method of dealing with them, that He believed they were capable of realizing a sense of freedom, of becoming conscious of a personality of their own. Jesus meant men to be free as He was free. He moved about the country as an Original Person in the life of the nation. He stood apart from every established organization, not by neglecting what was due to them, but rather to emphasize the principle of the voluntary recognition and performance of duty. He refused to ally Himself with the spirit

of the age, with the wealth and influence of the world, all the forces which men call to their aid for success.

We must marvel at their absence, as the people marvelled, and search for the forces He employed if we fail to recognize His Divine power. With what was He equipped, this village Carpenter, this Teacher from Nazareth, if He was not Divine as well as human? Something mysterious in Him suggested the Divine Spirit to some of the people who followed Him, but they were so bewildered they could not, or dare not, say what they really thought, their admiration burst forth in expressions of wonder and amazement.

Jews in those days never thought of deifying a man; Greeks and Romans did it, but their beliefs and practices served rather to fortify the Jews in their firm grip of monotheistic principles. But the idea grew as the personality of Jesus became unveiled, until at last no doubt was left in the minds of those who entered into fellowship with Him that He was the Christ, the Son of God. His Divine nature remained in the background of His life, appearing as occasion warranted, never without a definite aim, and not when customary methods of procedure were sufficient for His purpose. He acted always for the benefit of others, not to force men's minds in the direction of His will nor their ways in accordance with His life. All the essential features of liberty Jesus reflected by His own experience, to show men how to think and act for themselves.

The common life of the multitude touched the Great Teacher, numbers stirred Him, but His work, as wide as the universe — He sent His disciples into all the world — concerned every individual soul. With infinite patience He taught the people one by one. He recognized that every life is a real thing. Every man presented a new problem to Him, and, though we have only a few instances of personal treatment recorded, they serve to emphasize the fact that the numbers of people with whom He came in contact were composed of individuals, and to each of them He made His appeal, and not to the mass. Even when He spoke to a multitude His invitation or exhortation

was direct and personal, and men now who read His words feel their singular application.

Although the people generally who followed Him listened gladly, owing to the nature of His direct appeal, individual response to His teaching was feeble; they were almost overwhelmed with His astounding revelation of the value and responsibility of the individual soul. Hitherto an ordinary man had occupied an insignificant place in the world; his personal life was swallowed up in the race to which he belonged, where his individuality shrunk beyond recognition. So strong were the ties that bound him to the national life, he had not sufficient strength to take advantage of the liberty of the life abundant Christ came to give in the fellowship of His Spirit. The people would have been more willing to accept the message of Jesus if it had been accompanied by the form of power which they understood, something external, or if it would have saved them from any effort of their own. The power came not by observation in the idea of an exhibition, not by means which deprived men of the will to contribute their share towards the attainment of the life of freedom. It was a greater achievement to inspire mankind by the gift of a new Spirit, for them to desire a new life and respond voluntarily to the will of God in loving service, than by the establishment of a new system create a set of mechanical subjects. God wanted new men with new hearts, not another system with more laws. When the impulse of a man is compulsory, he is enslaved; when it is voluntary, he is exalted.

The attitude of the people towards religious affairs introduced another factor into the situation. A distinction formed in the popular mind by the judgment of the rulers placed the people generally in two classes, the "righteous" and the "sinners." Jesus never lost sight of the prevalent idea; He never missed a suitable opening for dealing with current opinion. It determined in a large measure His methods of work.

Willing ears waited for a fresh presentation of the truth relating to their great expectation, but the message Jesus

delivered in the synagogues before an assembly of the "righteous," where He came into conflict with the rulers, often disturbed them. Those who clung most tenaciously to the ordinances of their faith as a proof of their "righteous" conduct, resented most His treatment of their traditional rules of life. Satisfied with their observance of law, they looked for the fulfilment of their hopes, not the transformation of their lives.

The "sinners" had no illusions about their position. However evil their lives might be, at any rate they did not add to their iniquity the pretence of being good. They were more real, and that is the reason why Jesus was more tender in dealing with them. His attitude towards sinful women became particularly noticeable, even surprising: the Pharisees could not understand it. In their eyes it savoured of ignorance, though never of sin, an unconscious tribute to His stainless character; they hated Him so they would gladly have advertised a fault if one could have been found in Him. They said the worst they could say of Him: that He was the "Friend of sinners."

Jesus never said "Beware of women," as He said "Beware of the Pharisees"; He never warned men against women. And one of the most striking results of His work and teaching is the change it has made in the position of women. They were separated from men in both Temple and synagogue, and if the requisite number of men to form a community for worship failed by one, all the women in the settlement could not furnish the deficiency; but, so soon as a boy became a son of the law at twelve years of age, his admission into full membership remedied the defect. No wonder boys learned to pray: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, King of the Universe, Who hast not made me a woman."

To all women Jesus was respectful; many became His disciples, entered into His fellowship, and ministered unto Him. They discovered in His fellowship an equality which can only be found in the life of the Spirit of the Divine Father manifested in His Son.

CHAPTER XI

THE LARGER HOSPITALITY

It is often reported, and as generally believed, that the Mission of Jesus was conducted in the open air. In the spring and summer crowds followed Him. He taught them by the sea, on the high ground above the cities of the lake, and in deserted places; but we must not neglect the unrivalled opportunities furnished by the social life of the time. No adequate idea of His work is possible without an estimate of social conditions, and especially of the importance of hospitality, the predominant feature of Oriental life. Conceived by the Western mind in the hazy atmosphere of romance, its significance and extent have never been appreciated. The force of circumstances in the exigencies of life compelled men to adopt the generous practice of hospitality; it became the means of social intercourse, and behind it lies a great truth, the reality of God's provision for the bodies and souls of men.

Wherever man is found an appropriate supply of food is necessary for his maintenance. In his efforts to obtain the food he usually remembers himself, ignores others for whom the provision is also made, and forgets the Provider: the gift is more to him than the Giver. This attitude depends generally on the amount available.[1] Where there is a scanty supply there is not so much to think about, and more thought may be given to others. Anxiety produces new feelings that deal with the deepest things in human nature. The sense of need creeping into the heart brings a man face to face with the realities of life; he sees the needs of others besides himself, and by an irrepressible harmony of thought fellowship is formed.[2] It is an essential condition of life that whoever

[1] *E.g.* St. Luke xii. 17–19.

[2] *Cf.* Elijah at the brook Cherith during the famine, and after the brook dried up (1 Kings xvii.).

would be a helper of men must have fellowship with men, he must identify himself with them. This is particularly noticeable in the country of the Bible; it is the philosophy of the Incarnation, and there is a remarkable correspondence between the idea of fellowship in the life of the people of the land and the teaching of fellowship in the Book of the land. Nothing like this association of ideas has ever appeared elsewhere in the annals of mankind.

Events in human history become more definite and intelligible to a man as he breathes the atmosphere and looks on the scenery amid which the events occurred. In considering the relationship of the Land and the Book, a greater truth will dawn upon his mind if he desires to penetrate the mystery at the heart of things which forms the basis of the fellowship of men, and of the fellowship of men with God.

Where life is most simple man lives close to reality, no trappings of the artificial guise of civilization obscure facts, and a delightful air of abandonment pervades his home, the home that is but a shelter from the prevailing conditions of the climate of his dwelling-place. Two features of his life appear as the fundamental basis of existence: the need of support, and the need of defence. In every place where life is stripped of all complications these two facts are plain: nowhere are they so plain as in the desert. Life as seen there is known by the sparsity of its needs and the limited measure of their supply. Nature is not prodigal in the wilderness of the East except in the silence and monotony of the long stretch of arid waste broken in few places by coarse scrub and flinty hills. Life in the desert is transitory, passing in continual change from one place to another. The peril of the sword and the pain of hunger make it so. It is as restless as the sand in the sirocco's breath, ceaseless in its longing for rest and peace as the parched ground for water. "Need" is a word that might be written large over the face of the country of the nomad tribes on the Palestine border; it is met by the offering of what a man possesses, however small, to all who

apply for succour; his hospitality extends equally to the wanderer in need of food and the fugitive in need of a refuge. He is called *Thaif Allah, i.e.* "The guest of God," and the food that is offered him is the gift of God. There is a significance in the name of the guest and his treatment which passes unrecognized from continual use, the idea of God being lost in the need of man. Yet it is in the need of man that the idea of God is realized. God so constituted man a creature of need that fellowship might be established through which the need is supplied, and for the sense of fellowship to develop into such an intimacy that unity of purpose might follow.

The desert homes of the Bedawin exhibit the most appropriate form of a dwelling for transitory people. A piece of cloth woven by the women and thrown over stout poles and fastened by cords to pegs driven into the ground as a shelter from the burning sun is the conception of the crudest savage. Everything they possess is constructed on the same simple plan. Articles which look formidable in a list are packed away in an incredibly small compass; all being of a portable nature, the tent and its accessories can be moved with as little labour as possible.

The "houses of hair" are pitched round a central tent, not always in a regular form, but in a way to show its conspicuous position as the abode of the chief; and all who camp with him are said to be in what they term his "fellowship," and subject to his patriarchal control. He is their chief, they are his people. He calls the men "Awlâd"—*i.e.* children, lads; the two are identical as one large family and remain in close relationship until disobedience to his rule severs the connection. The disobedient member of the community departs; he leaves the camp and pitches his tent elsewhere under the rule of another chief. Between the tents of the tribesmen and the abode of their chief there is a large space which might be termed the outer court. The tent of the chief, the centre of government, has before it a spear, the sign of his authority. It has two apartments; the first, in which the guests are received into

his fellowship while they remain under his roof, whether strangers or friends, where also the elders of the tribe gather, and where the nomad court of justice is held under the presidency of their chief, whose word is law; the second, the innermost part of his dwelling, separated by a veil of cloth from the former, is private, and among other things it contains a box, the repository of the valuables in his possession.

There are, therefore — using terms with which we are familiar, though unknown as a description of the desert camp amongst the people — three courts: the outer court between the tents of the tribesmen and their chief; the inner court where he entertains; and the innermost court, the shrine of his private life represented by himself in the exercise of his influence.

The customs of the wilderness were naturally adopted by the Children of Israel in the wilderness, and on this plan God revealed His presence by the fellowship expressed in the nature of their abode; [3] His dwelling-place, a tent, a tabernacle, being set in the midst of His people,[4] who were brought into fellowship by the situation of their homes and the exercise of their faith. They never saw Him, but the place of His abiding, the tent, was always before them. Having entered into His fellowship by faith, their conduct followed the direction of His will. The more intimate the fellowship the more direct became His control, and a stricter sense of right conduct became the rule of life. This revelation was made through the ordinary channels of the life of the people of the desert, when the Children of Israel lived and moved in the wilderness amongst the tent-dwellers of the shifting sand.

The fellowship with God came through the avenue of their faith, something like the faith of the people in other camps, extended and elevated by the presence of the Deity. This is more apparent when we remember that God reveals Himself to man in order to raise him to a higher and better state of life than the one in which he is naturally disposed to live. We

[3] Exod. xxix. 45, 46; xxv. 8; Leviticus, xxvi. 11, 12. [4] Num. ii. 2.

may therefore assume, with reason, that the successive steps of his elevation begin with something which he can understand, and probably has partially recognized independently, as the commencement of the upward path.

The tents of the Israelites were arranged on the principle of all the larger encampments of the desert, but on a more concise plan: the tent in the centre — the Tabernacle of God — was more elaborately furnished, everything about it was on a grander scale, altogether superior to the home of a desert chief. The knowledge of art and manufacture obtained by the Israelites during their sojourn in Egypt was used to make the dwelling-place of God more appropriate for His presence. This central tent had two apartments,[5] and the innermost, behind the veil, contained a box, the ark of the covenant of God, the symbol of His Deity.

The camp of the Israelites differed from that of the people of the desert in its relation to the outside world. The central tent was reserved for a particular people subject to the law that issued from it,[6] both in their conduct at home and their intercourse with their neighbours. Strangers were denied access, even to the enclosure round the Tabernacle, on pain of death;[7] the fellowship of the Children of Israel meant a great deal more than the nature of the fellowship of wilderness people. Baser elements underlying the idea of fellowship in the nomad tribes was often obscured by the higher character of their common life. In their camp, where the life of a man lay open from his infancy, a moral standard prevailed that lost its value away from home. Beyond the camp the influence of the chief had no restraining power; there the instincts of the untutored savage developed into cupidity and crime, making his life a great hazard: "his hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him."[8] His life served to enhance by contrast the glory of a people which, from such depths of ignorance and cruelty, could rise to the heights of

[5] Exod. xxvi. 33.
[6] Exod. xxv. 16.
[7] Num. i. 51.
[8] Gen. xvi. 12.

wisdom and virtue that the Children of Israel attained through their fellowship with God.

The distinction between the old order, the wild fierce spirits of the wilderness, and the new standard of life of the people of God could not fail to be recognized as being due to an advance in their conception of a higher authority than the sheikh of a desert tribe. The establishment of Israel was on also a larger scale, and more suitable for an organized society.

When they settled in the land of Canaan the plan of their desert camp was retained throughout their history, modified according to the circumstances of their life in town and village. It has been preserved by the inhabitants of their country even to the present day.

In the Temple of Jerusalem it appeared by a similar arrangement, but on a more magnificent scale, indicating a further advance in the understanding of the people of the majesty of their Divine Lord. Although the first Temple was built by foreign architects, who introduced many foreign ideas into the structure, the three-fold division, corresponding to the three-fold division of the camp of the Israelites in the wilderness, formed the plan on which the glorious edifice was raised; and in the heart of the shrine, in the thick darkness of the Holy of Holies, stood the symbol of the Deity, the Ark of God.

The Temple built by Herod followed the same plan. Its exclusive character remained as the cherished privilege of the people of God, who still kept the Gentiles at a distance. The outer court, with pillared cloisters of great beauty, "caused an amazement to spectators by reason of the grandeur of the whole"; "its fineness was incredible."[9] Strangers were admitted into this enclosure. Here the various teachers instructed the people; conferences were held: crowds gathered on any pretext; and eventually this court became a busy market-place. It had three gates, one on the east toward the sunrising, through which the Israelites entered. A stone wall for a partition encompassed the next enclosure. Attached to the

[9] Josephus, *Ant.* Book XV. xi. 5.

stone partition was an inscription [10] forbidding strangers to pass within on pain of death. Still more inward was a third enclosure into which it was not lawful for any but the priests to enter. In this court stood the Holy of Holies, where God dwelt within the veil enshrouding the mystery which concealed Him from human sight.

The outer form of the dwelling-place of God, His Temple, remained in all its glory, but the sense of God's presence departed from the people as their faith declined, and the spirit of fellowship with Him passed away. When the glory had gone from Israel, and the sense of fellowship had been lost, Jesus came for God to set up His abode in the hearts of men. The form of His appearing was a tent of the flesh, the universal habitation of the soul. In this tabernacle, the form of man, the old revelation, and the new revelation more appropriate for the circumstances of the time, were combined in one Person. Emmanuel, "God with us," tabernacled with men for the manifestation of God to the world, and for men to enter into fellowship with God in Him. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of "a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us through the Veil, that is to say, His flesh." [11] Behind this Veil was God, more real to the people, if their spiritual sight had not been dim, than when His presence was hidden in a tent of cloth in the desert, or within the Holy of Holies of the Temple in Jerusalem, where they saw only the dumb structure of His abiding-place.

In the fulness of time the old order passed into the new way. The progressive revelation of God showed that, as the establishment of the Children of Israel in the wilderness exhibited a higher stage of the moral law, through fellowship with the Divine Being, than the life of the nomads of the desert, a more elevated sphere might be attained when the moral faculty became capable of receiving a higher revelation through

[10] This inscription has been found by the officers of the Palestine Exploration Fund, and photographs of it have been published. *Cf.* Num. i. 51.
[11] Heb. x. 20.

fellowship with Christ. In the Old Testament we see the way of approach for man to God; in the New Testament we see the coming of God to man.

The idea of the three courts still prevails. We are therefore able to observe how Jesus lived amongst the people. We may also recognize the way of His approach to them in the character of their hospitality and the symbolical arrangement of their homes. He sought access to them that God might dwell in them, that the Divine Spirit might enter into the larger hospitality of the soul, "and as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God." [12] His great commendation at the last assize will be, as He Himself has declared, "I was a Stranger, and ye took Me in." [13]

Slight alteration may have been made in the passing of years, but in the main, both in principle and purpose, the original plan is seen, modified according to the settlement of the people and their station in life. In the desert and the village and the city, the idea of fellowship has been preserved by the people indigenous to the soil of the Holy Land; hospitality retains its ancient attributes; and the room for guests forms the centre of the common life.

The house of an opulent resident of an Eastern city is arranged on the same plan as the Temple, and the design of the desert camp, for the performance of his social duties as well as the necessary requirements of his family. He sustains two relationships: one in the privacy of his home life, the other in the exercise of his influence. So strict is his conception of family life that it is lost to the world in him, the representative and head.[14]

Outside his dwelling there is no sign of the means at his disposal, no element of display is seen in its external appearance. Behind the door set in the spare blank wall that flanks the street there is the courtyard, the *khoosh;* at the end of it, facing the door, a raised reception-room furnished for guests,

[12] St. John i. 12. [13] St. Matt. xxv. 35. See also p. 460.
[14] *Cf.* Col. iii. 4: "Your life is hid with Christ in God."

the *lewan;* and, above all and beyond all, the *aleyieh,* the upper room for the intimate friends of the "goodman" of the house. The *khoosh,* the *lewan,* and the *aleyieh* correspond in a general way with the three courts.

The door opens from the street into a vestibule or porch, the porter's lodge; sometimes direct into the courtyard. When a feast is in progress in the *lewan* the door is left open, and any one passing by may walk inside. The open door is their invitation.[15] Thus the woman who was a sinner entered Simon the Pharisee's house [16] when Jesus was invited to supper, and the Pharisees passed into the courtyard of Matthew's home when he entertained his Lord.[17]

On leaving the courtyard to step into the next room, the *lewan,* the shoes are removed and left below as a mark of respect; the headdress is kept in its place. Although this reception-room is open to the courtyard, where every one may be seen, it is a distinct advance towards the fellowship of the householder, and, while any one may walk in the outer court at supper-time, none may approach the next apartment without an invitation. The outer court is for general use, and often occupied by the admirers and followers of the rich man, and many gather there without the notice of the host. When Jesus was examined in the *lewan* by Annas the High Priest a motley company assembled in the courtyard, some of whom warmed their hands at the charcoal fire that was burning there.[18]

Beggars stand outside the door morning and evening after breakfast and supper to receive the broken meat distributed at the end of every meal. Nobody would be more surprised than a beggar to receive an invitation to a feast. He is afraid even to walk inside the court. The Pharisees discouraged the aspirations of the poor. Guest-chambers in a city are not institutions for the indigent, but the places where the dignity of the goodman of the house is raised by receiving a guest of

[15] *Cf.* Rev. iii. 8; 1 Cor. xvi. 9.
[16] St. Luke vii. 37.
[17] St. Luke v. 30.
[18] St. Mark xiv. 67; St. Luke xxii. 56.

distinction, and his influence generally corresponds with the extent of his favour toward his fellow-men. Its display increases their respect, enlarges his circle of friends and acquaintances, and brings them into contact with all sorts and conditions of men, who mingle freely in the courtyard without the restraint associated with a private house. There is no other place of meeting except the street and the bazaar, and these are uncomfortably narrow and frequently congested with traffic.

Another apartment in the goodman's house is reserved for those who belong to the inner circle of his friends, where they meet in the calm and quiet of his home, away from the strife and the turmoil of the city's streets. It is the upper room, the *aleyieh*, the innermost court: it may even represent the centre of the mysterious life of the man who admits another into his fellowship. His attitude is threefold, according to the arrangement of his house: the outer court for strangers, or mere acquaintances and followers; the inner court for friends; the innermost court for those whose hearts beat in sympathy with his own.

When there is no public reception the door is shut. If a stranger, or even a friend, arrives at a house he must stand at the door and knock, then wait until enquiries have been made from within about the person outside.[19] If they are answered in a satisfactory manner the door is opened and the visitor is ushered in with profuse apologies for the delay. Jesus said: "Ask, and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you," [20] and his words fell into men's minds familiar with their order and meaning. Men ask for things, seek for persons, and knock to gain admission. He has another message by which He desires to obtain access to an interior: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." [21]

[19] *Cf.* Acts xii. 13, 14.

[20] St. Matt. vii. 7.

[21] Rev. iii. 20; *cf.* Acts xii. 13, 14.

Jesus often appeared in many courtyards where He taught the people: He reclined as an invited Guest at many tables: once only do we find Him in an upper room, and there He ate the most notable feast of His life on earth, His last supper. During His last days in Jerusalem He sent two of His disciples to prepare for the Passover; they were told to ask the question, "Where is the guest-chamber?"[22] and the upper room, the *aleyieh*, the room reserved for guests in sympathy with his own life, was opened by a hospitable man for Jesus, where the last supper was instituted. Its significance is enhanced by the combination of time and place and purpose. The richest fellowship that it is possible to conceive, a fellowship Divine, was established in the mystery of a love so profound that it has never ceased to exercise an influence on the heart of man for good greater than anything else in the world. That room was sanctified by the presence of Jesus, and multitudes which no man can number have confessed their belief in the efficacy of His presence for realizing the effect of His fellowship.[23]

There is no absolute proof, but a reasonable probability by the force of association, that it was where the disciples met after the crucifixion. Once a room is reserved for Jesus there He will be found in the time of need. He entered unexpectedly when His disconsolate followers were utterly cast down, entered with His peace for their troubled hearts. It was no doubt the same room where they waited for the fulfilment of His promise, and on the Day of Pentecost His power came to the Apostles for them to go forth to the world as the witnesses of His life.

If we interpret the room in the goodman's house by a good man's heart, we shall see what happens when Christ is hospitably entertained. What is symbolical may become real in the larger hospitality of the life of man. This is the order of the benefits of His reception, possession,[24] peace,[25] and power.[26]

[22] St. Mark xiv. 14. [23] *Cf.* St. John vi. 48–51, 53–58.
[24] St. Mark xiv. 17. [25] St. John xx. 19. [26] Acts ii. *2*.

Provision for the wayfaring man in a village is not so elaborate as that of a town. While every householder is willing to welcome the stranger, all are not able to entertain him. In the city the door of a house is only open during a feast; in a village the door of every house is open all the day like the tents in the desert. And, like the camp in the wilderness, one place is specially prepared for guests, the *medâfe*, the village guest-chamber, furnished and maintained either by the sheikh himself, or the community, according to the law of God in the Old Testament,[27] unknown to the peasants as a Biblical command but kept by them as a part of their heritage.

The law for the care of the stranger as declared by statute to be the will of God exists today. When the harvest is being removed from the fields a portion is purposely left until the rest of the corn has been taken to the threshing-floor. This is called by the Fellaheen *laket*, and if the owner was asked why it remained until the harvest was nearly over, the reply would be, "Meshan Allah" (For God). It is the corner of the field for the poor and the stranger, and is collected, with the produce of others corners, and placed in one great heap for division into three parts: (1) for the poor; (2) for the stranger, to maintain the guest-chamber; (3) for the *Khateeb*, the village priest and teacher. This custom is strictly binding on every man, and represents his contribution for the welfare of the community in which he lives, and the wayfaring man at his gate.

The indignation displayed by the two Apostles at the inhospitable conduct of the Samaritans in refusing to receive their Master and His followers into their village when passing through the country indicates their feeling towards those who failed to observe the common law, and the measure of the failure may be estimated by the nature of the punishment the Apostles wished their Lord to inflict upon the village elders, and those who supported their extraordinary treatment of

[27] Lev. xxiii. 22.

wayfaring men;[28] incidentally it offers substantial evidence of their belief in His power.

The exercise of hospitality developed into forms of entertainment with elements of a social and domestic character, and all important events were celebrated in this way. When other means were devised for public recreation, outside the guest-chamber, the disintegration of family life and social fellowship began, the taste for simple and homely joys grew less, and the desire for pleasures which could not be admitted into the circle of the home altered the character of social life. Amongst the Jews in the time of our Lord the better class of the nation kept themselves aloof from the amusements of the Gentiles.[29]

Oriental hospitality, besides nourishment for the body and opportunities for the amenities of social life, provided for a social university, catholic rather than academic, where close union with different classes of men produced an intellectual movement that furnished them with knowledge which bears no relation to what we call education with the limitations placed upon it by scholastic attainment. Even illiterate men, through their association with men of superior mind, attained an acuteness of intellect and a refinement of manners that enabled them to discuss matters relating to affairs outside their own experience. Most of the men I met in the guest-tents of the desert, and the guest-chambers of small towns and villages, were unable either to read or write, but many of them were remarkably efficient in understanding. In the East men are not condemned to inferior rank through ignorance of letters. No newspapers exist in the country, and, as this was the state of affairs when Jesus lived in the land, a similar method had to be adopted in His day for circulating information. It had to be transmitted in the perpetual intercourse of man and man. Rumour kept men's tongues busy, but something more than rumour occupied their minds.

There was always an audience ready for Jesus and provi-

[28] St. Luke ix. 54.

[29] Josephus, *Ant.* Book XV. viii. 2.

sion for His maintenance. Naturally those who were attracted by His teaching became His hosts. Few instances [30] are recorded of the invitation of the rulers, and these apparently serve to show the attitude of the Scribes and Pharisees towards Him. Whenever He became their invited guest He was treated with a certain amount of condescension, and even discourtesy, sufficient for us to see the character of the men who rejected Him.

Into this vortex of social life, varied according to the place in which the people dwelt, and their station, Jesus passed with His message where He found suitable means of intercourse with all classes of people. When He sent the "Twelve" and the "Seventy" on their respective missions, they were told to rely on the customs of the time.[31] The leisure of the Orient, and the insatiable desire for the discussion of religious problems, were the circumstances of the age. When these matters are duly considered a better understanding may be obtained of the work of Jesus. Without an appreciation of these conditions, differing as they do from any experience of the West, it is impossible to realize with any degree of accuracy how the Gospel was preached and how it spread. Only by a right estimate of the value of Oriental hospitality will the growth of Christianity be properly understood.

Men with a mission, and "holy men" on different errands, often dress in conspicuous attire [32] (*e.g.* John the Baptist). Many appear ragged, and to those who have no sympathy with them even ridiculous. Nothing unusual in the costume of Jesus attracted attention, nor were there any marks of worldly distinction to recommend Him. His seamless robe represented a peculiarity of His village; He appeared in the ordinary garments of a highly respectable member of the community. Jesus relied on His conduct and His message, and the means He possessed as the Divine Son, to manifest the wisdom and the power and the love of God for the welfare of man.

[30] St. Luke vii. 36; xi. 37; xiv. 1.
[31] St. Matt. x. 9–12; St. Luke x. 4–8. [32] St. Matt. iii. 4.

Until the Apostolic band was ordained He moved about with a few followers, and His modest needs were supplied by the hospitable customs of the people. The establishment of His little school of disciples, and their wandering life, necessarily introduced the common purse, and their treasury was kept by Judas. How it was filled and the way in which it was replenished we cannot easily surmise. Probably each member contributed the means at his disposal, and nameless disciples, some of whom must have been in affluent circumstances, rendered assistance when it was required.

CHAPTER XII

A VISIT TO JERUSALEM

After some time spent in Capernaum and the neighbouring cities of Galilee, Jesus went to Jerusalem to a feast of the Jews. Considerable difficulty is experienced in locating the season of the year for naming the feast. So many authorities on the life of our Lord are in disagreement respecting the time that it is well-nigh impossible to decide with any degree of accuracy whether it was the Feast of the Passover or a less important festival of the people. Reference is made to it by the Evangelist to account for the fact of Jesus being again in Jerusalem, and, as this is the essential feature of the narrative, the name of the feast is not required for his story. It is only useful as a guide for ascertaining the duration of our Lord's ministry.

A certain period of time was necessary for the process of development of the faith of the Apostles, and for the growth of the hostility of the rulers and their influence on the people. Allowance must also be made for unrecorded movements, and for journeys to which allusion is made without reference to time, though all may well be included within the limits prescribed by the three [1] Passovers definitely mentioned. If this unnamed feast was another Passover, one more year must be added to the life's labour of our Lord. Leading commentators are in the main opposed to the suggestion that it was the Feast of the Passover, and the consensus of opinion of the harmonists of the Gospels appears to be in favour of its being the Feast of Purim,[2] a festival instituted to commemorate the relief of

[1] St. John ii. 13; vi. 4; St. Mark xiv. 14.

[2] The origin of the Feast of Purim is without Divine authority. The name is derived from the Persian, and means "lots." It is kept to commemorate the discomfiture of Haman and aggrandisement of Mordecai (Esther viii.), and the book of Esther is read in the synagogue to asso-

the Jews, and the overthrow of Haman, their tormentor, in the Kingdom of Persia.

John the Evangelist, in whose record the feast is mentioned, was probably the only disciple who was with Jesus in the Holy City. He alone gives an account of the visit. As most of the Judean ministry is related by St. John with the fidelity of an eye-witness, and there are indications in the Gospel story of his special knowledge of the people of Jerusalem, an interesting conjecture arises regarding the Apostle. It may be assumed, and with reason, that business affairs required his frequent presence in the Jewish capital. His father having hired servants, the fishing industry in which they were engaged was extensive, and, as a better market was found in Jerusalem for the sale of fish, he acted as agent for his brethren. In this capacity he would also come into contact with the Greek inhabitants of the Decapolis, and through his intercourse with them increase his knowledge of their language. We need not, therefore, be surprised that it is seen in the Gospel which bears his name. It has even been asserted that he was a native of Jerusalem,[3] and visited Galilee for the purpose of carrying on a trade in fish. However eager we are to know his position, we must rest content with the fact that he was more familiar with the South than the other Evangelists.

In Jerusalem there was by the sheep-market a pool, called Bethesda, having five porches, occupied at certain seasons — probably the Jewish festivals in the early winter — by a large

ciate the day with Jewish history. This does not check the exuberance of feeling the people display. When the name of Haman is mentioned they cry, "Let his name be blotted out," stamp with their feet, and shake rattles to show their loathing. Outside in the streets and houses there is a feast of merriment, wine is drunk copiously, and all kinds of sweetmeats are given to the children. In Jerusalem these are made in the shape of shoes, slippers, hats, etc.

[3] Professor Burkitt, in *The Gospel History*, p. 237, says: "I still think that many of the old arguments which tended to prove that the Evangelist had been a Jew of Jerusalem have never been satisfactorily disposed of." Professor Knowling, in his work, *Literary Criticism and the New Testament*, quotes the above statement in a long discussion on the authorship of the Fourth Gospel (p. 30) where he furnishes strong proof of St. John's position as it is generally accepted.

number of impotent folk, blind, lame, and palsied. They believed that whoever was the first to enter the pool after the troubling of the water was immediately cured. The exact position [4] of the pool with the comforting name, Bethesda, *i.e.* House of Compassion, is unknown: the healing virtue of its water is lost. Probably an intermittent spring at the bottom of the pool, and its appearance at the time of a feast, gave rise to the belief in its medicinal value. If it were possible to accept this theory, the time of the year would not be difficult to fix. Unfortunately, this indirect evidence is not sufficient for proof. We may certainly assume, from the knowledge we possess of the climatic conditions of the country, and the use of pools and cisterns, that the amount of water in a pool denotes the season of the year. Both at Purim and the Feast of the Passover the pools are well filled by the winter's rains, and, although a spring might be stronger at that time than at any other, its appearance would be less noticeable owing to the depth of the water in the pool, and at this season it would be impossible to put a paralytic man into a pool without endangering his life on account of the high walls by which the water is enclosed. When the winter rains begin a spring is likely to become active, and, the water being shallow, its activity would be noticed by those who believed in its virtue. And the Feast of Dedication,[5] in the winter, soon after the first rains have fallen, is therefore the more probable time of the

[4] The traditional Pool of Bethesda is Birket Israel, now partially filled with rubbish. A more modern identification has been made by those who were engaged in the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund. All the evidence they bring has not fixed the site, but it has shown that the pools they discovered were deep. The idea of an intermittent spring in the pool is probable and reasonable. There is one in the so-called Virgin's Fountain.

[5] The Feast of Dedication was appointed to commemorate the restoration of the Temple for worship after its defilement by the Syrian Kings, and the deliverance of the nation from Syrian bondage, by the Maccabees. A right understanding of the principle involved in the motive for the Feast and a recognition of the claim of Jesus might have secured for Him a welcome as the Deliverer from the bondage of sin and the Restorer of the Temple for spiritual worship.

year for our Lord's visit: it was certainly an appropriate occasion.

The Evangelist tells us no more than accounts for the poor cripple who had been regularly brought to the pool for thirty-eight years. He sat there friendless and alone. His wonderful hope must have almost vanished with his continuous failure to enter the water. It was revived when his miserable condition attracted the attention of Jesus, Who had apparently heard of his woeful plight. The singular proposition He put before him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" [6] seems a superfluous question. But it is sometimes more profitable for a man to be lame; he excites the pity of the compassionate, who rarely pass the needy without offering assistance, and his helplessness becomes a means of gaining a living. Our Lord's question is a notable contribution to our knowledge of His methods of dealing with the people. Knowing what was in man, He wished to test the cripple before He treated his case. The poor creature had so long been associated with the indigent, he might have been more satisfied to receive help than health. A change from a long course of idleness in wretchedness to a better state would demand from him a corresponding measure of activity. It was well to test his sincerity.

Some of the miracles of Jesus partake of the nature of parables, and the cure of the impotent man represents the restoration of those whom sin has incapacitated for spiritual exercise. Every one lying in moral sickness has not the wish to be healed. He is afraid the change involved would be less agreeable; what he might gain in one direction he would lose in another. The new situation arising from the alteration of his circumstances alarms him; he thinks the old is better, and elects to remain with his friends in the old way.

The wretched man in Bethesda's porches was anxious to be cured, but there was no one to help him into the pool. That was exactly the position for a man to be healed by Jesus. When he was in real need and none to aid him Jesus came to

[6] St. John v. 6.

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole

John V: 8-9

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net

Luke V: 5

his assistance. He said to the impotent man, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole and took up his bed and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath." [7] Having confidence in the words that were uttered, he obeyed with alacrity, rolled his padded quilt, and walked away. He was soon stopped by the Jews, who informed him that it was the Sabbath Day and unlawful for him to carry his bed. When he answered them, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk," they asked him, "What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk?" "And he that was healed wist not who it was." [8]

Jesus afterwards saw him in the Temple and warned him to lead a better life. Whether he was displeased with further attention recalling his past, or afraid of what might happen to him for carrying his bed on the Sabbath, we do not know, but, having ascertained the name of his Benefactor, he went and told the Jews. He must have known their feelings towards any one who violated the restrictions placed on the day, and out of pure selfishness thought it advisable to turn their anger away from himself to another. "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath Day." [9]

It seems almost impossible to understand the cause of the persecution of Jesus. Carrying a quilt does not appear to be a great offence, especially when it was borne by the man who had been laid upon it in his weakness, and simply conveyed it home after his recovery. The miracle of healing is ignored, even the man restored is overlooked, the Jews were in such haste to deal with the Healer Who flagrantly violated their law. What He had transgressed was not the law of God, but the formalism they had created by traditional usage, the miserable substitution of the letter for the spirit. As the inner power and true meaning of the law disappeared from the life of the nation, the outer form assumed an exaggerated and even

[7] St. John v. 8, 9. [8] St. John v. 11, 12, 13. [9] St. John v. 16.

a ridiculous importance. The spirit died, and was buried under a load of censorious absurdities.

The modern Pharisee in Jerusalem is not less careful of the letter, magnified to please his opinion. It is carried to such an excess that he cannot see the grotesque and frivolous character of his Sabbath observance. If he has not tied a pocket handkerchief to his clothing before the Sabbath begins he will not use one; nor will he cut his nails on a Friday lest they begin to grow on the Saturday. Nothing must be carried even from one house to another; his scruples, however, are overcome by fastening a rope to the doors for attaching several houses together to form one dwelling.

The rest on the Sabbath was God's protection of the labourer, to save him from the oppressor. In directing their attention to Jesus, Who had told the man to carry his bed, the rulers were following their instinct for good, but God was forgotten in their excessive zeal for the defence of the letter of their law; their elaborate traditionalism obscured the spiritual aspect of the Divine ordinance. Christ's answer to their charge of Sabbath-breaking contains the fundamental truth of all things relating to God's care for man. He exposed their mean mechanical contrivances for rules and regulations to hide their ignorance of God's love, Whose beneficent activity continues throughout all time, Whose judgment will be passed on motives within the heart, and not only on the means employed to put them into action.

The solemn majesty of Jesus as He delivered the address recorded by St. John [10] was as great a contrast to the pompous manner of the rulers as His sublime words were to their ridiculous rules. The contention about the Sabbath became the occasion of the greater controversy respecting His claim to be the Christ implied in the alleged breach of the Sabbath.[11] His relation to the Father being raised in the dispute, Jesus claimed perfect oneness with Him, perfect love between Himself and God, and perfect submission of His will to God. Aris-

[10] St. John v. 17–31. [11] St. John v. 18.

ing out of His claim to this personal relationship with the Father [12] came the claim to a new personal relationship with man.[13]

The whole discussion concerned the great subject of the inner life, the life eternal, and this life is to be found in fellowship with Christ, the Son [14] of God, from Whom it may be received by the believer.[15] Definite and unmistakable testimony to Christ as the Son of God, Jesus declared, was found in the witness of John,[16] the witness of His own miraculous works,[17] the witness of the Father,[18] and the witness of the Scriptures.[19]

We have now reached the crisis in the work of Jesus in Judea. His claim to be the Son of God had been rejected. The rejection was not regarded as final, but it indicated the necessity for another way of dealing with the people. If the priests and the people in the more exclusive part of the nation would not respond to His claim, and by its reception become the means of establishing the Kingdom of God on earth, He must gather round Him a new priesthood of a different kind, new Fathers in Israel, corresponding in number with the patriarchs of old, a body of select men of the people to become His witnesses, and lay a new foundation for the universal dominion of the Kingdom of God. The opportunity of the rulers of the Jews passed from them; henceforth Galilee, the least esteemed part of the nation's home, because of its proximity to the Gentiles and the foreign element which had entered into that part of the country, became the sphere of His labour.

Galilee formed a better background for the Gospel than the more austere elements of Judea. The severity of the character of the inhabitants of the southern province corresponded with its physical features. Jerusalem, its capital, the centre of Jewish life, comparatively inaccessible by its situation in

[12] St. John v. 19–23. [13] St. John v. 23–29. [14] St. John v. 26.
[15] St. John v. 24. [16] St. John v. 36. [17] St. John v. 36.
[18] St. John v. 37. [19] St. John v. 39.

the dry mountainous region, encouraged the people to resist all efforts to bring them under a more benign influence.

A softer climate, more fertile soil, fields in spring dressed in living green and decked with innumerable flowers of incomparable beauty, created a charm in the northern district which tended to produce a less rough and rigid conception of life. A natural happiness arising from prosperity, and a tenderness in the smiling landscape of the country, contributed their share in the formation of the character of the people. A more tolerant attitude towards religious affairs followed; even the Tetrarch Herod was not disposed to interfere with religious methods when peacefully employed.

An essential difference is apparent between the character of the Ministry of Christ in Judea and in Galilee, and another element of distinction is found in the treatment of their respective narratives by the Synoptists and the author of the Fourth Gospel. The silence of the former regarding our Lord's work in Judea, compared with John the Evangelist's treatment of the Judean ministry, is not wholly accounted for by his superior knowledge of the country, nor is his reticence respecting the greater part of the work of Jesus in Galilee due to any distinction he wishes to draw between the nature of the work in the two provinces. His aim is to interpret the life, to exhibit the exalted character of Jesus, to show that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and he selects from His actions such as will best answer his purpose. The events he records seem to be chiefly reported in order that he may give the discourses in connection with them. In some of these discourses ideas are contained in mystical language differing from the utterances reported by the Synoptists. Their dissimilarity may be as easily reconciled as the diversity in the people and the places with which they are associated. We recognize the part of the country where Jesus laboured whenever He appealed to nature in His parables, and the people whom He taught by the allusions He made to their occupation and particular interests. His most profound thoughts were reserved for His

disciples; His most terrible utterances agreed with the circumstances in which they were spoken and the people to whom they were addressed. St. John informs us of the enmity of the hierarchy in Jerusalem. We know more of the matters relating to them from him than from the other Evangelists. They began their narratives with the work of our Lord in Galilee after His season in Judea, when His disciples baptized and the nation was called to repentance. That work included the training of the disciples for the great enterprise which might have been undertaken by the rulers at the head of the nation if they had not been obdurate, hardening their hearts to resist the claim of Jesus to be the Son of God.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CALL OF THE DISCIPLES

HAVING foreseen the result of the declaration of His claim to the rulers of the Jews in Jerusalem, our Lord proceeded, on His arrival at Capernaum from the Holy City, with His preparation for the accomplishment of His great task to save the world. His first disciples who had been with Him in Judea for several months, and had accompanied Him through Samaria, left Him for their own homes when He went to Nazareth and Cana. He followed them soon afterwards, and the remainder of the summer was spent in wandering quietly through the country preaching the good news of the Kingdom, returning at short intervals to Capernaum. John probably accompanied Him on His brief visit to Jerusalem, before the final call was given to the disciples to leave their occupation on the water for their vocation in the world. Meanwhile, they were engaged in their usual labour, occasionally meeting with their Master, without being identified by anything more distinctive than their association. This grew into closer fellowship as the summer waned, and they patiently toiled with their nets in the waters of Gennesareth. Their fishing in the sea was a great contrast to the exaltation of their souls in the presence of the Master, but the vision of the better prospect they had gained with Him, and the hope they had conceived of a more perfect life, strengthened their hold on their sense of duty. Such men were made for leadership. Something in their idea of the supremacy of duty qualified them for a place in the widening outlook of a great purpose; something in their self-restraint and in their faithfulness kept them employed during the time they waited for the sign of its appearing. It came to them when they were performing their ordinary daily work.

Soon after Jesus returned from Jerusalem, as He walked

on the strip of shore with its tangle of boats and nets and people, the rough and rude elements of the fishing port, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting their net, and James and John in a ship with Zebedee their father. He said to them, "Follow Me." Simple words of mighty meaning: and nets and ships were left for Jesus.

The disciples came to the Master as simple children of nature, with open minds which expanded with the perception of truth for the reception of more truth, and the more they advanced in believing the truth the stronger were the grounds of assurance that were granted to them. "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance" (St. Matt. xiii. 12). And the truth was Himself. He selected them that He might teach them about Himself. They were not the best nor the wisest men of their day when they were first chosen, but in them was found an essential worth which rendered them capable of instruction, for the truth of the Gospel to shine among men through their minds as the channels for an appeal to mankind. This was the Master's design, and for the achievement of His purpose they eventually became His Messengers, His Apostles.

Before finally ordaining them for this great work He must test them, and the situation now adopted was preliminary, their call a preparation. They walked along the shore together until a dense crowd gathered to hear the Master speak. Unable to proceed, He entered into Simon's boat, sat there apart from the people, and taught them His wondrous lessons beside the sea. From the assembly on the beach He turned His attention to the men in the boat, and told Simon to launch out into the deep and let down his net. A long night's fruitless toil was fresh in the disciple's mind, his impulsive nature, prompted by his sense of disappointment, asserted itself, and he told Jesus their efforts had already been unsuccessful; yet, without further hesitation, he said at His word they would let down the net. His word, spoken in opposition to their knowledge and experience, had a will behind it which prevailed

on Simon. Yielding to this will, they cast the net and the result amazed the fishermen. An unexpected haul, more than they could handle, was the reward of their obedience, and their partners in another boat were summoned to help them in landing a miraculous draught of fishes. This evidence of the power of Jesus was an instructive lesson to Simon. A tumult of emotion stirred his heart as a flash of Divine light illumined his soul. He saw the greatness of the Master, and his own weak and unworthy self. Alarmed at his thrilling experience, a sense of separation surged uppermost within him, and he cried: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Encouragement was offered by a definite call for service, "Fear not," said Jesus; "henceforth thou shalt catch men."

It meant the abandonment of his occupation for the new direction of his life, towards a labour he could not apprehend; but it was plain enough to him a clear call had come, and he must obey. We think, perhaps, of his loss, the loss of friendships formed on the water in the swelling storm, and on the shore of the sea, of the things that had been most to him in life, and now had ceased to interest him; let us not ignore his immeasurable gain. His Lord had awakened in him the consciousness of a superior will, the perception of a greater truth, the desire for a fuller knowledge of what had changed his outlook on life. New thoughts were born, thoughts lying dormant in his nature waiting for a call to set them free.

His brother and his partners were also called to become "fishers of men," and the miracle they had witnessed was a promise of the success which might be obtained through the same power they had seen at work. They were not unaware of the decision required for the severance of old ties and the resumption of new tasks, and they were unafraid; but the possibilities latent within them for the higher work they never suspected; the Master revealed their existence in His inimitable method of instruction.

They were the first members of the new Society He established, the inner circle round Himself as the centre, for the

truth about God, His Gospel for mankind, to radiate through them to the world. Their part in this great and glorious enterprise was to bear witness of Him, to show that the truth was a power in their lives, and evidence is found to prove its nature in the testimony of the people after they were left to carry on His work;[1] its extent is visible in His influence on mankind, an influence far more profound than the will of man. It is the force of His Spirit in the domain of the will.

We shall notice, before we reach the end of the life of Christ on earth, that this Society was destined to continue: His work included the preparation of the men who responded to His call for its continuance. And for the admission of other people into it He ordained two solemn observances, one[2] (Baptism) which expressed the distinction of the Society from the world; the other[3] (the Supper of the Lord) the unity of the members of the Society with its Founder and with one another. Of these ordinances, as necessary for their future work, the early disciples at first knew nothing. They were called to personal loyalty by One Who offered Himself as the supreme object of their devotion.

After His departure they arrived at certain conclusions which are now regarded as Christian theology. He never baptized, never instituted ceremonies, nor settled services. It was left for man to put them into shape; the outer form belongs to man. And these outward forms, whether they are theological terms or ritual observances, change with the circumstances of time and place; but the truth as it is in Jesus is unalterable and eternal.

The call of the Apostles is one of the most significant features of the ministry of Christ; it is not less remarkable for the difference of the characters of the men He selected for special instruction than the light it throws on the Messiah Himself.

Great men are generally men of one quality of mind or thought which they possess in a superlative degree. It is for

[1] Acts iv. 13. [2] St. Matt. xxviii. 19. [3] St. Luke xxii. 19.

this side of them they are reckoned great, and all men of like taste and sympathy, who have in some measure the same quality, admire and follow them. Jesus was not a Man of one side, possessed of one attribute in perfection, but of all sides; He combined in His Manhood all attributes in perfection. No picture drawn by human hands has ever shown all His attributes. Most of the drawings portray His tenderness, generally in a form of weakness. Few artists have attempted to exhibit His strength of mind, and fewer still His courageous heart. Yet every attribute will be found in the different situations He occupied. But there was something else in Him which we see that was not so fully revealed to the disciples when first they shared His company, although it was evident to them in a degree that distinguished Him above the religious teachers of His time. The universal nature of His mind and heart established points of contact for men to associate with Him; but this link of human sympathy, however strong, is not in itself sufficient to withstand the pressure of the world and its alluring devices. Multitudes followed Him, as they do to-day, as far as their faith is supported by their experience of human duty and obligation, and they take certain principles of right revealed by Him because they offer an ideal which suits their nature; but when He would have their life subject to the Divine ideal, and regulated from a Divine centre, that will turn all the forces of life, in work and rest, into submission to the Divine will, the spiritual seems to the natural man to lie outside human interest, and they exclude themselves from His Society. When this is done definitely and determinedly, it is by an expenditure of energy which discloses, in its refusal to obey, a resistance to a power that is not contained in a human ideal.[4] It is an unwilling witness that Jesus still lives, that He still draws by His Spirit as He called the fishermen of the Galilean Sea. It was His Divine nature shining through His personality that attracted them. And this combination of greatness, the greatness of the Perfect Man and

[4] *The Fact of Christ,* by P. Carnegie Simpson, pp. 78, 79.

the might of the Divine Power within Him, formed the most sublime personality that men have ever known. It still passes man's understanding, but it never fails to attract those who seek with a sincere [5] and intense desire a knowledge of the life He came to impart. The variety of the characters of the men who have responded to His call is an acknowledgment of His greatness and a proof of His saying, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." [6]

Spiritual truth demands an acceptance which reason cannot always create; its illuminating power and its attractive force are its own evidence, and it appeals to men of every kind and disposition with a directness which overcomes all barriers of thought in every race. When a response is made to this appeal it means a change in all the prospects of life. A new object is found on which the heart is fixed by a personal attachment that draws men from themselves into a new fellowship to submit to another will. In the fellowship of Jesus in union with Him, a man becomes more susceptible to His influence, and more adaptable to His ways. He will have before his eyes an ideal of what he may himself become. And when, by the willing submission of every part of his life to the absolute control of Jesus, his heart is stirred by new feelings, a new self will make its presence known, and his true life, liberated from all the hindrances to its expression, will receive more readily His Spirit to conform to His will.

Man has the capacity for being filled with another Spirit, an endowment for his personality which he is free to accept or refuse. Jesus recognized the freedom of the personality of the individual; He treated it as a sacred thing; and though men were neither pressed nor persuaded to follow Him, yet some gave up everything at His call. The singular personal force in Him drew men out of themselves, and some who expressed their desire to follow Him were told to count the cost; others were tested that they might see themselves and their position, and then decide. Every one who is attracted

[5] St. John xviii. 37. [6] St. John xii. 32; iii. 14; viii. 28.

by Jesus will find himself treated in accordance with the particular nature of his case, and left to make his own choice. In this respect Jesus differs from all the great leaders of men, who sought followers either to further a cause or found a kingdom. He stands alone, isolated in His greatness above all men in that He has no personal ambition, and no prospects; He looked for no pleasure, and no personal happiness; and those who followed Him felt the freedom from selfishness which they gained in His company. He taught them to be free, and set them an example in His life and work that they might be free indeed.

In the process of His teaching He made demands upon them greater than any man had made on his fellow-men to test their sincerity, and from those who felt His power He received all He asked. Their attachment to Him did not alter their cast of mind; it always remained the same, but their natural disposition was sanctified by His Spirit entering into them and helping them to discern His increasing influence as He was being revealed, and the progress of the revelation depended on the measure of their response. He not only revealed to them His personality but His purpose, the salvation of the world; and He mobilized them for the continuation of His work, so that it might not be for their day only, but for all time. And they declared they had received something which had transformed their lives, and they lived as new free men in the world of men; and this freedom they transmitted to others as man's heritage from God. Other discoveries were made by some of His followers which caused them to leave Him. Their expectations were based either on a false estimate of gain in the new Kingdom, or a perverse notion of its nature, and when they saw their prospects of the future slipping away from them they departed. From some of those who loved Him and served Him we have a record of their Master's life that could not have been invented by the simple fisherfolk of the Galilean Sea. No human intellect could produce from the resources of fiction or philosophy the account they give of the words

and deeds of the Son of Man. Bare incidents are related with a fidelity due to the indelible impression made upon their hearts, and the Spirit of truth, by Whom they were moved. When they are apprehended by the sincere seeker after truth they are applied by the Spirit of Jesus to his soul, and he receives the call to follow. Jesus said, "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." [7]

A Sabbath in Capernaum

The active ministry of Jesus is well described by three Evangelists in their account of the Sabbath in Capernaum following the call of the disciples. His attendance at the synagogue strengthens our belief in His care for the observance of the duties of godly people, the necessity for meeting together in common prayer and praise, for a right understanding of the will of God.

A few marble fragments of a synagogue lie among the ruins in the cities of the lake, and though we may not be satisfied with their part in the famous building erected at the expense of the centurion who loved the Jews, we are justified in forming in our minds a conception of the place to which Jesus went on that memorable day. They help us to build again and see in imagination the lost city, and we may behold the vivid brightness of the morning when the sparkling waters of the lake, reflecting the rays of the sun, made all nature look joyous, and a solemn stillness reigned in the market by the sea.

The synagogue had little room to spare when Jesus began to speak. A full report of His sermon has not been preserved, but a few notes may be found in St. Matthew's Gospel. They do not convey to the ordinary reader the effect they produced on the people. Accustomed to a dull and listless repetition of well-known phrases, they were startled by the spontaneous outburst of living speech with a Divine power that moved the hearts of the congregation. They listened in silent admiration, when suddenly a wild cry was heard from

[7] St. John xviii. 37.

their midst. An unhappy wretch, afflicted with an evil spirit, had crept into the place unobserved. The poor demoniac felt the resistless power of the sermon; the evil spirit within him, disturbed by the voice of the Holy One, cried out, "Let us alone: what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God."

The excitement naturally grew with the ravings of the poor maniac, until Jesus calmly rebuked the evil spirit, saying, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him." [8] In a paroxysm of fear and convulsion the sufferer fell to the ground, his frenzy ceased, and he was restored to his right mind. Methods were adopted by the exorcists of the time for the treatment of men possessed with unclean spirits so utterly unlike the quiet and dignified manner of Jesus that the members of the congregation were amazed. A new power had appeared before them; and, as they left the synagogue, their admiration was expressed in exclamations of wonder. They said, "What a word is this? for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out." [9]

From the synagogue Jesus went with Simon to his house, where his wife's mother lay sick of a fever.[10] St. Luke the Evangelist, as a physician, uses a more technical phrase in describing her state; he says, "And Simon's wife's mother was holden with a great fever"— a distinction which those acquainted with Eastern fevers understand, and he informs us how she was healed.[11]

When evening fell and the Sabbath was ended, relieved of their religious obligations the people from various parts of

[8] St. Luke iv. 35.

[9] St. Luke iv. 36.

[10] St. Mark i. 30; St. Luke iv. 38.

[11] He alone tells us how our Lord healed the stricken woman, and he alone introduces the word παραχρῆμα, "*immediately* she arose," a word which, from its frequent recurrence in St. Luke has impressed critical writers with the accuracy of the Evangelist's knowledge, and their frank confession "that tradition is correct in ascribing to St. Luke the authorship of the third Gospel."— *Literary Criticism and the New Testament*, R. J. Knowling, D.D., pp. 12, 13.

the city came to Simon's house. Soon an eager multitude thronged the streets bearing their sick to Jesus. The ravings of the demoniacs, mingled with the hum of many voices, announced their presence, and Jesus laid His hands on them and healed them all.

Weary with the long day's toil, He retired to rest, but before the morning broke He stole through the silent streets to a lonely place on the hills above the town.[12] The retreat He sought, a retired spot where He refreshed His soul in communion with the Father, was evidently known to the disciples. In their intervals of leisure they had doubtless been with Him there listening to His words and learning to become accustomed to His ways. There they found Him and said, "All men seek for Thee." He replied, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth." [13]

[12] St. Mark i. 35. [13] St. Mark i. 37, 38.

CHAPTER XIV

A MISSION THROUGH GALILEE

From an ordinary human estimate of the opportunity in Capernaum the departure of Jesus seems inexplicable. His miracles of healing had roused the populace to a high pitch of excitement and made Him famous, and just as they were ready to honour His work He left them. He had no desire for fame, and no wish to be known as a wonder-worker. The people were seeking Him for what He had done; they were anxious to retain His services for more of His deeds of kindness and gifts of healing, and not for the message of salvation. He read the secrets of their hearts, He saw the drift of their minds, and passed from their midst to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom elsewhere.

The restraint He showed in the exercise of His power was as wonderful as its display, and the wisdom disclosed by the methods He adopted in dealing with the people was derived from the source of His power. This quality of wisdom is not frequently associated with the work of Jesus, yet His sagacity is as extraordinary as His sympathy. A mere wonder-worker would have paraded his ability, and used it to increase the number of adherents to his cause. Jesus had a better way. He went about doing good, but the good was for the improvement of the soul, and for this purpose He healed the broken in health to restore the stricken spirit. By His miracles He showed His compassion for human need, and He secured from those whom He healed a certain faith, a kind of miracle faith, not always the faith He wished to inspire by His teaching. It often produced no moral change either in the recipients of His favour or in the witnesses of His cures; it might even have been entertained by those who without religious aspiration continued to live in sin. He accepted their faith for what

it was worth; He was neither deceived by its nature nor its extent. He saw that it sprang from a desire for temporal benefits, and they were not withheld until He perceived that the element of selfishness in their appeal for a further exhibition of His power might, if encouraged, hinder the growth of real faith. He then withdrew Himself from their midst.

It must have cost Him an effort to suspend the gifts He longed to bestow on the people, when He felt for their unfortunate condition and had the power to relieve them.[1] His apparent unconcern was only the maturing of His purpose, the ripening of opportunity. He was always ready to help and to heal, but He would not accede to the wishes of the crowd and respond to the popular desire to become a Healer when His purpose was to teach them to know God's will, and believe on Him Whom He had sent. He appealed to their understanding with His word, to their conscience with its truth; He would not condescend to resort to a lower claim for the acceptance of His message by the use of His miraculous power to coerce the spirit of the people. No permanent gain follows a compelling cause; the one departs when the other ceases. Something more substantial than the wonder created by a miracle is required to convince a man of his need of a new way of life.

Our Lord refused to work miracles as a proof of His Mission. When He appealed to certain Jews in Jerusalem to believe His works,[2] if they would not believe on Him, it was not to the miraculous character of the works that He drew their attention, but to the Divine origin of His power. Nicodemus [3] acknowledged its source because of His works. The miracles, then, become the proof of His union with God; not the evidence of a supernatural endowment, but of a filial union so perfect that He could command the resources of omnipotence for the fulfilment of His vocation.[4]

On leaving Capernaum He visited the neighbouring towns

1 *Cf.* first temptation. 2 St. John x. 38. 3 St. John iii. 2.
4 *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus,*" by A. E. Garvie, D.D., p. 232.

and villages; "and there came a leper unto Him." [5] The only specific incident of His mission through Galilee mentioned by the Evangelists is the brief story of this leper.

Leprosy is one of the scourges of the East. A pathetic group of people may be seen today outside the walls of Jerusalem, from whom the cry, "Lepros, lepros," comes in a pitiful wail. Prohibited by the authorities from entering the city on account of their disease, they excite the compassion of the stranger and the pilgrim on the road, and one glance at the wretched objects causes even the merciful to shrink from them with horror. But none feel the loathing of the ancient inhabitants of the land, who were taught by their Scriptures to look upon the fell disease as a type of sin; and the lepers were shut outside the gate. As soon as the taint is visible the afflicted one must join the colony without the city wall. He seems to have no pain, though the limbs are first blotched and swollen, and the face marred by scars and serried wounds. Little by little a limb decays, a hand is lost, and only the stump of the arm is left.

The sanitary caution mentioned in Numbers v. 2 was not the only motive for ceremonial enactments which forced the leper to live apart; a far deeper reason accounted for his exclusion from the community. The dread disorder was specially selected, as being the most loathsome and incurable of all, to represent the defilement of sin upon the once pure and holy body of man. His life became a plague and a disgust to the nation. He was beyond the reach of human aid, and considered as dead.[6] In God alone was there a hope of recovery.

One of these poor creatures, in spite of all the precautions to keep him from the community, ventured into the place where Jesus taught. The name of Jesus drew him. His pity for the helpless and His power to aid them urged the man onward. A great hope had been born within him by the tidings he had heard as the story of the love of Jesus passed through the district. It was borne upon the lips of the people along the

[5] St. Mark i. 40.

[6] Josephus, *Ant.* Book III. chap. xi. 3.

road. Men and women, when they met, discussed the startling events they related to one another, and the wretched man standing near them listened to the wondrous account of the works of Jesus. In the recesses of his soul the gloom had set, the shadow of the tomb; the awful separation his disease had caused was a living death, and the mental agony he endured when he was forced to leave all the world held dear to him shut the door of hope for ever. All happiness had vanished and life had lost its value. Now his outlook on the world was changed, the name of Jesus removed his fear, courage entered where despair had settled, and the leper sought His face. Kneeling before Him, he said, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." He touched the leper and said, "I will; be thou clean."[7] His gentle hand carried with it the cleansing power, His simple words the assurance of the cure. The voice of Jesus sounded, as no human voice before or since has sounded, in the sweetest accents of love Divine. His pure and holy hand rested on the polluted man and made him clean.

The leper was told to show himself to the priest and perform the ceremonial acts demanded by the law. He was charged to refrain from talking about the extraordinary way in which he was healed; but the change was so wholesome and complete he could not resist the desire to make it known. Such a thing was never heard of before; no one had ever touched a leper, and none had pitied him. Disgust too often showed itself on the face of the man compelled to gaze on his repulsive appearance. And now all was different. Jesus had touched him; His compassion moved towards its object with a gentleness and a tenderness that transformed a loathsome being into a living man.

For the sake of the legal spirit of the people, Jesus kept away from the towns. The leper's report of his miraculous cure would be sufficient cause. We can understand our Lord's consideration for the man in sending him, in conformity with the law, to obtain a certificate to show that he was clean, and

7 St. Mark i. 41.

the reserve enjoined might cause the man to think more calmly on what he had experienced; but his joy was so great he could not refrain from publishing the news. By His injunction of secrecy Jesus desired to place a check on the circulation of mere report concerning His miracles. The repetition of the report of His works from one person to another might carry a confused meaning of them amongst the people. Their real meaning might thus become obscured; the deeper lessons they contained might disappear.

While Jesus respected the legal aspect of the leper's case, the people who really needed His help paid no attention to the circumstances of the cure; they sought Him where He could be found.[8]

We can form an idea of the circuit of this missionary tour from incidental allusions[9] in the narrative, and in this particular instance it was confined to the towns on the shore of the lake and the deserted places on the hills above them, where in retirement further instruction might be given to the disciples. The conspicuous place in the account of the journey occupied by this miracle is probably due to its significance, and it no doubt engaged the attention of the disciples in the training they received to become Messengers of the Kingdom of God.

From His retreat in the desert places Jesus went to Capernaum.[10]

[8] St. Mark i. 45. [9] St. Mark i. 38, 45. [10] St. Mark ii. 1.

CHAPTER XV

THE RETURN TO CAPERNAUM

The news that Jesus had returned spread quickly through the city. He was followed to the house,[1] in which He was received by an anxious crowd that gathered to hear Him speak. He probably sat in the shade of the verandah at the side of the courtyard, and the people on the pavement before Him, even to the door. In their dismay the friends of a paralytic man saw there was no more room, but, having brought him to Jesus, they were determined to attract His attention. If they could not enter the courtyard they would climb the steps that led to the roof. Apparently baffled by the tiling on the top of the verandah, which formed the shelter from the sun for the rooms on that side of the house, they removed the obstruction and lowered their pitiful burden. The sick man suddenly appearing before the Preacher interrupted His discourse; His compassion was aroused. Looking upward to the men whose bold venture had summoned His aid, and seeing their faith, He turned to the palsied man before Him and said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."[2] The perseverance of the four men who carried the sick man to Jesus, and their resolute will to overcome all difficulties, showed a faith so strong it brought forth the power that healed their friend. Something more

1 St. Mark ii. 2.

The house in which our Lord preached does not appear to have been Simon's. A synagogue has been suggested on account of the number of people present. This is unnecessary and improbable. The courtyard of a house would accommodate a large number of people, and Oriental hospitality furnished the opportunity. It is this factor in Eastern life which enabled our Lord to meet so many people. Wherever He went others would be able to follow Him.

The uncovering of the roof does not refer to the fixture over the rooms, but a less substantial cover for a side of the courtyard.

2 St. Mark ii. 5.

than the power to heal came from the Preacher. He saw within the man, whose palsied limbs refused their office, a secret need, and, though His unexpected words fell on the ears of the astonished people around Him, since they seemed to bear no meaning to his case as it appeared to them, the sick man knew, as he looked in the face of Jesus, that the sin haunting the chambers of his soul was discovered, the secret story of his life was revealed. His aching conscience, stricken with the restless memory of the past, stirred within him, and the inward cry of his penitent soul was heard and answered.

Certain scribes sitting there heard also the words of Jesus, heard them with their outward ears when the forgiven man received them with his inward spirit; the same words, but without the significance of the radiant hope they conveyed to him. Their hearts were moved with indignation, they were roused by what seemed an arrogant assumption of authority which belonged to God alone, and for a man to usurp the Divine prerogative was blasphemy, and His statement a licence for the sinful man to continue his offences.[3] Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, asked: "Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, take up thy bed and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way unto thine house."

He was aware of the critical inspection under which He laboured, that the leaders of the people, having been alarmed by His increasing popularity, were ready to denounce Him on any pretext, and He met their contention without hesitation and without fear. Instead of disavowing the interpretation these hostile Scribes attached to His declaration, or repudiating the construction placed on the meaning of His words, He distinctly asserted His right to the Divine prerogative, He insisted on His claim to forgive sins, and it was

[3] St. Mark ii. 7, 9, 11.

justified by the assurance of pardon the palsied man received with confidence and certainty. Evidence of the power was seen when the sufferer rose from his bed and walked; he had found both forgiveness of sins and the strength to move his palsied limbs.

This incident marked the commencement of the active opposition of the Jewish rulers; it was the turning-point in their attitude towards Jesus. No one doubted the genuineness of His miracles; they had not even been questioned. His right to heal on the Sabbath Day was disputed, and displeasure freely expressed on His new way of treating their holy day; but the element of antagonism it caused was nothing compared with the storm created by His tremendous claim to forgive sins. The Jews had never expected their Messiah to assume a prerogative which they attributed to God. Neither prophet nor priest had assigned such a power to the One they expected to restore their Kingdom. Isaiah had foretold that the Holy One of God would atone for the sin of the world and make intercession for transgressors; but it was one thing to expiate the guilt of man and quite another thing to pardon it. The former might be accomplished by a human agent: the latter was a superhuman act of the Eternal God.

This assertion of Divine authority to cancel the moral debt of man indicated to the rulers of the people in Galilee a vast change in the mission of Jesus; it was a claim for their recognition of His Divine origin, and the Hebrew conception of God, which correlated Divine power with Divine mercy, should have enabled them to see the Divine nature in Christ, when it unveiled before them a heart to love as well as a power to heal. But they had lost what we call spiritual perception, the power to penetrate truth contrary to common experience, the truth about God in which power and love were blended, the thought of God to which the prophets and psalmists of old gave utterance in sublime accents of exaltation.

From this time the idea becomes more intelligible that Jesus came to introduce a new factor into society. The true in-

wardness and meaning of it were not realized until His redemptive work was complete; but the germ became visible in His unique personal claim of relationship and power. He not only claimed Divine power to forgive sins; He taught the Divine meaning of forgiveness. He practised forgiveness, and it is this distinctive feature of His character which has impressed the world; it is so far removed from what may be expected of human nature that no other interpretation of it can be given than Divine; and those who have appreciated His love and experienced His power have shown by their own lives the meaning of forgiveness. It is the fundamental part of the moral system Christ established, and when the Christian spirit is mentioned, the main element in it is usually understood to be a forgiving spirit.

A bitter antagonism now arose in the Jewish rulers towards Jesus. They hated Him more for His claim because the evil in them resisted the good He made manifest, and no effort was spared by them, nor an opportunity lost, to detect a flaw in His life and conduct. The contest between them grew, on their side with an intense desire to destroy Him and His work; in Him it was simply the determination to pursue His course. His pure and holy life was lived before them with a matchless courage that kept Him in the way that He had marked out for Himself amidst the envy and malice of His persecutors. His movements were watched, His words criticized, and His works deprecated; but the multitudes still followed and His disciples increased, and it was admitted at His trial that no fault was found in Him.

There were no means of conciliating the rulers; their prejudice having grown into hostility, another cause of offence was found in the attention Jesus paid to the outcasts of society. Some of them were His associates, and the more respectable people, those who considered themselves the better class of the nation, resented His treatment of the lower orders. It was not due to selection. He offered His gifts to all; no one was excluded by His will; the rich and poor, high and low, were

free to receive or reject His ministry, and all who responded to His teaching became His followers irrespective of rank.

One class of men was more obnoxious to Jewish sentiment than any other: they were the men, called Publicans, employed to collect taxes. The office of tax-gatherer was vile and degraded. Any Jew holding it was deemed unfit for the society of decent men, and he became the object of public scorn. On patriotic grounds his work was resented because he exacted the payment of tribute to Rome. He was tempted to overcharge, and his extortion became so notorious that every Publican was reckoned unmoral and excluded from religious fellowship. He was a detestable person, and returned with interest the feeling shown towards him by using his opportunities to oppress the people.

The Imperial Government demanded a certain revenue from tributary provinces, and its collection was placed in the hands of the men who offered the highest sum for each district. Only rich men could undertake the financial risk, but they never thought of personally gathering the taxes levied on the land and the people. This thankless office was relegated to men of unscrupulous character, owing to its unpleasant nature.

Ever since the Roman dominion of the land of Palestine the collection of taxes has been made by a similar method. At the present day one-tenth of the produce of the communal land [4] is due to the Government. This tax is publicly sold to the highest bidder, a speculator who expects to profit by the transaction, and, after paying the sum he offered, proceeds to recoup himself for the outlay from the peasants. Subordinates are employed for the more distasteful work. They are now called "Ashar," the word for tenth, a term of opprobrium, that is used on account of their extortionate practices, to designate greedy and merciless men.

There has always been a bitter cry against the tax-collectors; their harsh treatment of the poor, the insolence of their office, the tyrannical extortion on behalf of an alien Govern-

[4] See *Village Life in Palestine*, p. 137.

ment, and their own pecuniary advantage, placed them in a class apart. They were branded with public shame, and many of them sunk to the lowest depths of infamy. Having no character to lose, there seemed nothing left to prevent their fall.

One of these men had heard of Jesus. He had seen Him in the haunts of the Publicans and sinners of Capernaum, watched Him pass the custom-house of the city, and doubtless mingled with the crowd that followed Him. Jesus had noticed Levi, the son of Alphæus, as he sat at the receipt of custom, and one day, as He passed his place of business, said, "Follow Me." Levi immediately obeyed, and joined the little band that surrounded Jesus. He received a new name in his new vocation, and we know how great was the change within him from the Gospel that bears the name of Matthew the Apostle and Evangelist, once Levi the Publican, an outcast from the synagogue. No protest from the disciples marred his reception, although the necessity for associating with a Publican must naturally have been repugnant to their feelings; they had been changed, too, having become accustomed to their Master's ways and agreeable to His benevolent purpose.

Levi signalized his departure from the old life and his entrance into the fellowship of Jesus by a feast. Every important transaction of human life has its appropriate ceremony; even the sentiments of friendship require to be kept alive by tokens of regard, and the most suitable and regular form of commemoration in the East is a feast. Whenever a man wishes to proclaim his joy his feelings are associated with his fellow-men. His reason for rejoicing must become known, and his gladness shared. The birth of a child, the return of a relative from a journey, the restoration of anything lost, the marriage of a son, are all occasions for cementing friendships and celebrating events. Man is at his happiest and best when he is sitting at a common meal and engaged in congenial social intercourse.

Levi's feast signified his joy. His fellow tax-gatherers and

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

They that be whole need not a physician . . . go ye and learn what that meaneth

Matthew IX: 12-13

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroian*

And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might sen
them forth to preach

Mark III: 14

his associates were invited to witness it with Jesus and His disciples. The open door during the progress of the supper afforded an opportunity for the admission of the public; it attracted the attention of the Pharisees, eagerly waiting to discredit our Lord in the estimation of the people. Tax-gatherers' feasts, in their eyes, were disreputable orgies of eating and drinking. They pretended to be shocked at the appearance of Jesus, and were probably pleased to find Him in a situation that enabled them to advertise His misconduct. Their supreme solemnity of manner masked the frivolous character of their hearts, the mean disposition of their minds. Instead of appealing to Him direct, they questioned His disciples, saying: "How is it that He eateth and drinketh with Publicans and sinners?" [5] Jesus heard them, and with piercing irony vindicated His attitude towards the company in which He was found. With scathing rebuke He said: "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." [6]

Discomfited by His reply, they sought an alliance with the disciples of John the Baptist, who observed the practice of fasting in common with other advocates of abstinence, and were esteemed in the highest religious circles for their manner of life. John's disciples had a better reception than the Scribes and Pharisees, although they had been inveigled into a union with the adversaries of Jesus. He received them graciously, reminded them of their own master's words,[7] and the declaration of his position in relation to Christ as the friend of the Bridegroom, and asked them: "Can the children of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?" [8] the presence of the bridegroom being the time for rejoicing; then He added, "But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast." [9] He knew what lay before Him and His disciples. The shadow of the cross and His departure loomed in the distance, when

[5] St. Mark ii. 16. [6] St. Mark ii. 17. [7] St. John iii. 29.
[8] St. Mark ii. 19. [9] St. Mark ii. 20.

their joy would be turned into mourning. He further told them, in two homely metaphors, that His Gospel contained a new idea of religion which could not be attached to old worn-out tradition, like a new piece of cloth to an old garment, lest both should suffer; that it was like new wine which must have new wine-skins: the old, unable to expand, would burst and the new wine be lost.

As the Bridegroom, the Eternal God was visiting His people to begin among them a new and more joyous life, which must supersede the cold and austere application of old negative tradition. His new way of life was being made known as the Kingdom of God, and it signified His rule as a new union between Himself and them.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ORDINATION OF THE APOSTLES AND THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

In spite of the opposition of the Scribes and Pharisees, the tide of public favour was flowing high. Multitudes of people from Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond Jordan gathered to hear the words and see the works of Jesus.[1] More favourable opportunities for teaching them were found outside the towns on the appearance of settled weather. Sick folk, probably many of them from the baths of Tiberias, were laid on the wayside to be within His reach when He passed along the lake shore road. There was no room in the cities for them to assemble in the numbers that appealed at various times for help; the streets were too narrow and too much occupied with the daily traffic, and the courtyards of the houses were not always available for dealing with such large crowds. Between Tiberias and Magdala the road was less congested, and from it the ground rises in many parts with a gradual slope towards the mountain. Suitable places for addressing the people were more easily found in this neighbourhood.

The time was fast approaching for a clearer definition of the purpose of Jesus. His disciples found it pleasant and easy to gaze on His works of compassion, and the people followed gladly the progress of His healing power.[2] They saw no marks of the conflict which He bore in the struggle between His love for their souls and His care for their bodies. A higher standard of life than bodily health had to be set; a less popular movement inaugurated than that which arose in the excitement and novelty of His marvellous works. He had to count the cost for Himself of that perfect rule of life for man

[1] St. Matt. iv. 25. [2] St. Matt. iv. 23, 24.

which He came to establish. His insistence on quality and not quantity in His following would mean the gradual defection of the multitude. The will of God must be declared. Out of the depths of self in the disciples unsuspected powers must emerge to be quickened into a sense of duty — duty towards God and towards mankind.

He recognized the slumbering greatness of the men, the value and power of the immense possibilities for good in their nature which they had never seen. He came to call them into noble exercise, that the measure of their development might deepen and expand by the force of truth — truth as an essential reality, the great central truth that the will of God is the rule of a wise and loving Father which He exhibited in Himself. His disciples saw one way in which it was maintained, and one notable incident is mentioned.

We are informed that He spent the night in prayer before He ordained the apostolic band and delivered His great Sermon on the Mount. Very little is recorded of His habits and methods of prayer, and we are never told except on two occasions for what He prayed; but we may glean from the few instances committed to writing sufficient knowledge to indicate the character of His access to God. Two words occur in the Gospels which are used in definite allusion to prayer, one [3] that has a general reference to the soul's communion; and another [4] applied to direct supplication and intercession. The former is found in the text relating to our Lord's prayer in the darkness and loneliness of the night which preceded the momentous epoch of the world's history.

The crowds had dispersed; Jesus saw them retracing their steps towards the towns. His disciples had also left Him to climb the mountain path alone. Lights feebly shone from the dwellings of the people in the cities on the shore of the sea below; stars glittered in the deep blue vault above; around Him the darkness gathered, and the silence of His resting-place was only broken by the whispering night wind as it

[3] προσευχῇ, St. Luke vi. 12. [4] δέησις, St. Luke i. 13.

freshened on the hills. In the darkness He knelt in prayer to God. The sense of God the Father, wise and great beyond understanding, is deepened in the darkness, and a great shadow, even on a starlit night, rests in the glen below the summit of the mountain. Darkness is not all darkness; within it there is light, and as the eyes become accustomed to their surroundings the darkness retreats. So it is in man's search for God in Christ Jesus, especially when the darkness has been thrown around Him by the commotion and confusion of the human mind, and when earthly things prevent the absolute composure of the human spirit.

Absorbed in His filial union with the Father, Jesus prepared for the coming day. Thoughts for His Apostles' guidance, and the world's destiny, assumed their shape within Him. And as the purple light heralds the first streaks of the dawn of an Eastern morning, and gradually the varied colours shed a brilliant radiance in the sky, and the mountain-top is tipped with roseate hues, and the shadows are chased away from the lowlands, so Christ came forth with the laws of a new Kingdom for mankind. They were not peculiarly moral as the commandments delivered by Moses from the mount of God for the region of natural and human experience; they belonged to the realm where God abides, where the aspirations of those who have Him for their end and aim of life are satisfied; they represent its form for their guidance, and they contain its spirit for their support.

When Moses brought from the darkness of Sinai the first commandments, history made a new beginning, and the foundation was laid for the stage of moral principles. When Christ came forth from the presence of God history entered into a new sphere, and on the foundation of the moral code there was raised a moral ideal, which men acknowledge to be supreme, and many on that account excuse themselves from attempting to climb the steep ascent of the soul's great adventure. Jesus saw its peril, pain, and loss as He scanned the broad horizon of life, and He gave to men an instinct for power to walk on

the imperishable way, and a Guide to see them through.

Life on earth, with its brief existence and unsatisfied longing, embraces within its scope a higher and a better life. By confining its nature within the social structure of civilization men fail to see that it is a fraction of immortality, and therefore a part of the whole design of the Eternal Mind; that the constitution of society as a fellowship, a human brotherhood, can only be realized in the idea of a Divine Fatherhood. Something must connect the real life on earth with the real life of heaven, and reconcile the difference between them. We know there is a difference, and the only way in which it can be reconciled must be revealed in a form which men can see and acquire for their own use, and by means which they can employ for the benefit of their fellow-men. This is the revelation of Jesus Christ, God in Man, a transcendant Personality revealed in the conditions of earthly life. Through Jesus Christ, the incarnation of the Eternal in the temporal, we are able to recognize the design of the Eternal Mind, that the Kingdom of Heaven is life in the world of men organized by the will of God, life not only hereafter, but here and now; life as it flows into men willing to know and to do the will of God.[5] Since Christ revealed the will of God in Himself, the two worlds are reconciled. The visible and the invisible are no longer two separate and unrelated worlds. The higher sphere, for which men yearn, and into which they pass when the outward and visible fades away, is that state where no insurgent force exists. When we conform to the Eternal Will in this life we inhabit the eternal world, of which the visible is the outward part, and space and locality form our physical environment. By overestimating the value of the outward factors we lose sight of the vital principle that the primary condition of true life is personal and inward, the state, capacity, and outlook of the soul. Character, that is the kind of spirit in man, creates the mind which either limits or increases the faculty for realizing life, and the supreme revelation is through Jesus

[5] St. John vii. 17.

Christ. He showed that personality is real, and is not lost when it partakes of the fulness of the life He revealed.

For the purpose of making known the character of true life to all mankind, He called His disciples together in the morning. Their relationship to Him, hitherto somewhat indefinite, was made more clear by His choice of Twelve to be in attendance upon Him for a closer union of fellowship, and to receive from Him a fuller knowledge of the will of God.

He ordained them and appointed them to be Apostles. The title [6] He gave them expressed their vocation as Messengers with a direct commission to bear witness for Him, and carry His message with His authority. Simon and Andrew, James and John, Philip and Nathaniel, and Levi the Publican we already know. The last two in the future were recognized by other names, Nathaniel as Bartholomew,[7] and Levi as Matthew. In addition to these were Thomas, James the son of Alphæus, Thaddeus, Simon Zelotes, Jude, and Judas Iscariot, the only one who was not a Galilean. Very little is known of James the son of Alphæus, of Jude the brother of James, and Simon the Zealot, and but slight mention is made of Bartholomew and Matthew. Peter, James, and John formed the inner circle of the little company, and were admitted into the closest fellowship of their Lord.

One name on the list has been handed down to posterity with a stain upon it that excites the critics of the mind and heart of Jesus. They cannot understand why Judas the traitor was chosen by our Lord. Many theories have been conjectured to vindicate his election, some to justify his deed, and others account in various unsatisfactory methods for all its mystery. Judas was chosen because in him was the possibility of higher things, but he allowed the baser part of himself to rule. Every step he took in the tragedy of his life was watched, and — this, at least, we must remember — our Lord, in spite of all things, loved him even unto the end. As

[6] Ἀποστόλων (St. Matt. x. 2) means Delegates as well as Messengers.

[7] Bartholomew is a patronymic, Bar Ṭalmai, the son of Ṭalmai = a furrow.

far as we may reckon on knowledge, we may also assume that the problem of his life, and ours too, in our view of the choice our Lord made of Judas, lies in the relation between Divine foreknowledge and human freedom. Our moral freedom demands energy; His sustaining powers keeps it going. Jesus foreknew the part that Judas would play in the world's great tragedy, and we may suppose He recognized him as God's instrument for the fulfilment of His eternal purpose; he was not chosen because he would be bad, but that he might be good.

While the Apostles were being ordained the multitude increased. Probably the greatest number of people ever addressed by Jesus at one time and in one place had assembled together. No better situation could have been selected for a large audience in the vicinity of the cities by the lake than the mountain known as Kurn Hattin, the traditional site of this great event in the world's history. The utterances, on this great day of His life, of Jesus Christ, Who is both the revelation of God and the revelation of man, have been called the Sermon on the Mount. It was more than the sermon of the Greatest Preacher; it was more than the manifesto of the Greatest King; it was the unveiling of human life in the light of Perfect Humanity, and its translation into language suitable for the understanding of men who desire to behold the standard of the perfect life.

Those who see only a collection of ethical precepts in the Sermon on the Mount miss its essential feature, the real life it represents as the Kingdom of God, the rule of God in the life of man.[8] By attaching the Twelve, whom He had ordained, to His person to carry on His work, Jesus enabled them to see the principles of the perfect life in operation as a force flowing from the heart of God and lodged in a Human Life to blend with the forces that make human history. Out of the recognition of the Perfect Life exemplified in Jesus there gradually proceeded in the course of its development in His dis-

[8] St. Luke xvii. 21: "The Kingdom of God is within you."

ciples the consciousness of an Ideal to be followed, then the conviction in them that the Object was worthy of devotion. The quality of the Ideal stole into them, its elements were wrought into their being. They began to see the Life from the author's point of view, and to think His thoughts. They began not merely to desire to be like Him; they began to be like Him. There grew a new life within them, from the fountain and source of a higher life, His life, a Power incarnate subordinating everything to His influence through His will. By the progressive sanctification of the individual character, the will of man working in harmony with the will of God, His Kingdom, though spiritual and interior, becomes visible in the outward organization of a man's life. The nature of His Kingdom, the new and true life within, He declared was the character of its loyal subjects, and their character was to influence the world of men by weaving it into the fabric of their social life, and form a human brotherhood animated by the life Divine. He called it "blessed." With this word He commenced to reveal it, and, as He proceeded, each manifestation of the blessed life exhibited the marvellous change the Kingdom of God meant to them.

Its significance He showed by two metaphors, salt and light, for His disciples to know what they were expected to become as His subjects. He said: "Ye are the salt of the earth." They were familiar with the use of salt as a powerful preservative; they recognized the valuable properties contained in the common object they found so necessary to prevent the corruption of their fish in the hot climate in which they laboured. They were aware, also, how soon it lost its savour, and then, being worthless, was thrown away.

Perhaps they did not know, at the time He spoke to them, that the possession of such a character as the salt implied was to exercise a beneficent influence on society, that it was to enter, through them, in to a civilization fast hastening to decay; that they were to unite for their combined strength to arrest the decline and downfall of mankind. But their

Master knew, and He had chosen them to carry on His work in association with one another in His name, identified as a society, a fellowship, afterwards termed His Church; and their inward and spiritual life was the salt for them to become the preservers of social life and the savourers of mankind. He knew that the social achievement of the grandest kind would follow as a consequence of this life in them if they kept the single purpose of diffusing such a life throughout the world as the witnesses of His fellowship.

The outward and visible form of His Kingdom, as the witness to the world of the existence of its character and power, He illustrated by His reference to light. "Ye are the light of the world," He said, "a city set on a hill cannot be hid," and before them, on the hill to the north, was a city, with its buildings gleaming in the sunlight, set in the frame of the green foliage of its terraced gardens and groves, and surrounded by the wild and barren slopes of uncultivated land. This was the attestation of the fact of their existence as the fellowship, of a corporate body, the conscious testimony of its members in their union with one another, and their separation from the world. The evidence of their individual life, the unconscious witness of the life within them, was to be shown as it might appear in the darkness of the world's night. He said, "Ye are the light of the world." "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

They knew the meaning and use of light, of the little earthen lamp in a cottage home, the only illuminant of their dwellings. Lamp, light, and life have always been synonymous terms in the land of the Bible. The Apostles were familiar with the Scripture use of language imparting to the simple domestic article a vivid picture of life itself.[9] When the peasant of a country village closes his door at night, he lights his lamp, puts it on a stand, and retires to rest. Its feeble gleam of light is not for his own use; he goes to sleep; it shines through

[9] *Cf.* Exod. x. 23; Job xviii. 6; xxi. 17; Ps. xviii. 28; Prov. xx. 27.

the chinks of his door and his little window to show the traveller in the darkness without there is life within his home. Though he sleeps, unconscious of the world around his dwelling, he has a sure and silent witness that men may see he lives.

It is a sign of extreme poverty for a man to have no light burning after nightfall, and peasants referring to a poor man will say "He sleeps without a light"; they think he must be poor indeed if he cannot show he is alive. Early Christians, when they buried their dead, placed in the tomb with the body a similar little lamp, sometimes with an inscription on it in elementary Greek, such as "Light of life," as a token of their belief in life everlasting.

The whole of this part of the Sermon, although primarily addressed to the Apostles, was delivered to all the followers of Jesus, and it applies to all who bear His name. He is their great Example, His life is the salt of the earth and the light of the world, and His people, who enter into His fellowship and partake of His life, are the instruments of His purpose. The light shows the life, and the glory of it is not in the light itself but in the Provider, thus the shining that men see will be the means of directing their attention to the Master of the house; and the city set on a hill, which represents His fellowship, His Church, will call for their consideration of the Master Builder, and the glory of it all will be given to Him Who is the Source of the life they reveal.

The light of the life of God [10] presented a magnificent contrast to the stern legalism and worldly formalism of the day. Jesus exhibited it in these various forms of law to enhance its purity, and show how the true inward spirit is seen in outward acts. We have not, therefore, merely laws telling us what we must do, but principles for the direction of the citizen of the Kingdom to do when he submits to the will of God. Our Lord enunciated these laws with a brief preface on the importance of law, He disclosed His relation to it as its fulfilment, the crown and completion of all that had gone before,

[10] St. John i. 4, 5, 9; iii. 19; viii. 12; ix. 5; xii. 35, 36, 46.

and Himself as the supreme Authority proceeding from God to make His will known to mankind. He exposed the inadequacy of the letter without the spirit, and showed the defect of all life that was not rooted in God. He declared that "except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." [11]

Mere external observance is an unconscious instrument, lying outside the current of life, insensible of any connection, and incapable of expressing its movements. Christ's message came to the actual life of the time. He approached life from within, for the regeneration of its spirit to establish the moral correspondence, which He exhibited in Himself, between the inward spirit of man and his outward acts, and to show that the visible and invisible part of man form one Kingdom. This message is the truth in the sense of reality, not the truth conveyed only by information, or even by reason. A man may have a cartload of facts shot into his mind, he may become a storehouse or library, and be full of knowledge, and yet not be really true because these facts are not living truths to him; they furnish his intellect, but they do not inspire his soul and dominate his life. Religious beliefs may be lying about a man's mind as books on a shelf, or provisions in a larder; but if they do not grow into his life, and his life into them, they cannot be really a part of him.

The Scribes were the traditional expounders of the law, and the Pharisees the scrupulous observers. Law has not the power of acting on the will; it may keep a man from wrong-doing, but not from wrong-thinking; prevent wrong acts, but it will not create right feelings; it has a restraining influence, but not a regenerating force. Another factor is needed capable of exerting an attractive influence on the whole of man's moral being; to control the thoughts, and the feelings, and the will, one which can call them into activity for the desire of a better life, and furnish an incentive to holiness.

[11] St. Matt. v. 20.

This factor was missing from the Jewish rulers' conception of the law of God; they had lost the sense of God's authority as its source, accepting only its literal interpretation, to which they added laws of their own, and lóoked upon them as equally binding with the laws of God. And when Christ set before them in His Person the true life in action, according to God's will and law, they refused to acknowledge it, and resented His revelation because it was a constant rebuke, and hurt their conscience.

In the first illustration Jesus gave of the law of murder the springs of action were touched. He declared that an account will be taken of the state of the heart, the invisible Kingdom of the soul, and due punishment inflicted for sins of thought and word. And it will not be less severe because they arise from an unseen source and do not appear in action, but it will be similar in its spiritual aspect, in its relation to the Divine government, as the natural form in use at that time.

Among the Jews were well-known degrees of guilt recognized by the courts,[12] and the most severe penalty included the destruction of the body of a malefactor in the valley of Hinnom, where the fires had been burnt to Moloch,[13] and where the corpses of criminals were consumed with the refuse of the city;[14] and, as these fires never went out, the term "everlasting punishment" was associated with the name of the place.[15] There was no distinction of kind, only of degree; in each case the punishment was death; but, to intensify the horror of the last degree, the awful disgrace was added of throwing the body into the fire of the accursed valley, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.

The law of adultery referred also to the inward state preceding the outward act, and Jesus declared that the man who looked upon a woman to feed his unlawful desire had already passed the barrier of intention, and was guilty in the sight

12 St. Matt. v. 22. 13 1 Kings xi. 7; 2 Kings xxiii. 13, 14.
14 Lange, *Life of Christ*, vol. ii. p. 405 (note).
15 Hinnom, Gehinnom: ἡ Γέεννα τοῦ πυρός.

of God of a criminal offence. Matters relating to divorce naturally followed.

The law regarding oaths applied primarily to the Jews, who held no oath binding unless the name of God was introduced.[16] Such means of strengthening a man's word was required by the distrust provoked through the evil in human nature that made the oath necessary.

The abolition of the law of retaliation struck at the same root of mischief as that which necessitated the oath. In spite of God's commandment "Thou shalt not kill," the rule of life most convenient for desire remained as a governing principle in the national life. A notable development may be observed in the Old Testament of the recognition of God from the desire expressed in Judges vi. 15: "As they did it unto Me, so I have done it unto them"; to the prayer for His active interference on their behalf, "O Lord God, to Whom vengeance belongeth, O God, to Whom vengeance belongeth, show Thyself" (Ps. xciv. 1). The wish for retaliation still existed, but its achievement passed into other hands.

As reason developed in conformity with the will of God, though not always acknowledged, society took the law out of the hand of the avenger, and for the sake of the community administered the law itself and fixed an appropriate penalty. Where law operates justly a high standard of security prevails, but without positive truth law cannot change the heart of man: an incipient cause of strife is left in the individual members of the State, even when lawlessness has been subdued. It is the certainty of the penalty, and not its extent, which curbs the inclination of man. The disposition of the heart is for retaliation. On account of this fact of life, not only speculative infidels, but men of the world who generally regard with favour the tone of the Gospel of Christ, deem its morality romantic and impracticable, as being so transcendantly above the power of nature that it is altogether hopeless of realizing it in practice. It represents that peculiarity

[16] Deut. xxiii. 23.

in the ethics of Christ which conflicts most perhaps with the natural tendencies of the human heart, and by which it is most distinguished from all those moral systems which are of merely human origin. For the first time God became real. He was manifested in His Son, and His Spirit changes the heart of the man that enters into fellowship with Him.

The native of Palestine has only two methods of treating the serious nature of physical disease in order to get rid of it, either by branding the afflicted man with a red-hot iron or by letting out his blood with a sharp instrument.

Such a process often so weakens the patient that he dies. The progress and development of medical science have found a better way, that of strengthening the healthy part of man for the evil to be overcome by something better than itself.

Jesus showed by His miracles that a different plan might be adopted in the treatment of physical disorders. His touch enabled the good to predominate. He prescribed a similar method in dealing with moral and spiritual matters. He declared that men were not only to refrain from thoughts of violence, they were to entertain thoughts of love, "the expulsive power of a new affection." He advocated something more than the law which restrains; He exhibited the good which regenerates, and offered it to all who came into the fellowship of His Spirit. He desired His followers to possess something more than a resolute abstinence from deeds of hostility; the hostile feeling must be overcome,[17] anger must be subdued. It is not enough that man worketh no ill; he must have the love that worketh no ill, not merely no ill to his neighbour, but no ill to his enemy.

Jesus put love into the centre of His teaching because love is in the centre of His heart. It makes all the difference what is first and foremost in the heart of man. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." In the heart of every man, however vile, there is something of his great Creator, something that can be quickened into His likeness if it be allowed to grow.

[17] *Cf.* Rom. xii. 21.

And this universal quality is love. It is not easy to realize that there is this quality in its universal sense, it is difficult to recognize it in the name of love; yet it exists in the fellow feeling towards a human being. A man will save another man from drowning whether he be good or bad. He will not even stop to inquire. He would save him if he were a criminal, simply because he was a man. "By examples like this we may discover that the love for humanity as such is a natural passion." Jesus wished to touch it so that it might be the mainspring of life, and link together everything in their relative importance. By "treating it as the law-making power or root of morality in human nature," He "trained and developed it into that Christian spirit which received the new name of ἀγάπη (love)."[18] Love alone sees clearly. Without love the true interpretation of life is lost, and all things are out of proportion. Petty faults are magnified by a distorted vision, and the great issues of life obscured by mean devices.

When Jesus said "Resist not evil," He illustrated His meaning by His actions. The love He bore to mankind was the love He wished men to bear towards one another. The patience He exhibited under all provocations was formed by love. By resisting evil He did not mean condoning evil or forgiving evil. An injury can be forgiven by men, but the evil which prompted it none can forgive but God. Jesus forgave all injuries; He forgave sin also; but no one denounced more forcibly than He the evil in men's hearts. He showed that the judge and the officer and the prison were necessary for the dispensation of justice.[19]

The laws of a State are the expression of God's law, and must be upheld. The gift on the altar does not release a man from his debt to his neighbour; it has no value while the payment of an overdue account is deferred; hence the injunction, "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave

[18] *Ecce Homo*, by Sir J. R. Seeley, p. 174. See also page 353.
[19] St. Matt. v. 25, 26.

there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." [20]

The new law of non-resistance was a further advance for the removal of vindictive feeling. Occasions may arise when public considerations demand resistance. A man may then be justified in defending himself in a court of law. But when the matter is private he is enjoined to overcome evil with good, by offering even more than is demanded.[21]

Jesus pursued still further the line of non-resistance by offering cheerful submission to the imposition of public burdens.[22] Following the same direction in the development of the inner life, there arises, from the willingness to endure, the disposition to bear, and this produces the spirit of service, the loving and giving temper that considers the request of the needy and treats all men as brethren. With this sense of brotherhood a man lends without interest, as an act of love and not of profit. An act of love becomes a habit of love, and constitutes a rule of life. Enemies derive the benefits conferred on mankind by the highest and best expression of this law of love, and man becomes a partaker of the Divine nature when the Divine Spirit issues from a life that is manifest in its likeness to the Divine Father. The motive on which these exalted laws rested was always the same: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for He maketh His sun to shine on the evil and on the good." [23]

Having shown His disciples what they ought to be in order to do, Jesus now proceeds to tell them that this life for good which abstains from evil must not be ostentatious in its exhibition of good, but simply the life as it is lived before God. He forbade the manifestation of good deeds for the purpose of their display,[24] and told His disciples that the light of the Christian should shine without the expectation of personal recognition, that it is the motive which spoils his purpose in the publicity of his works. They must be performed with

[20] St. Matt. v. 23, 24. [21] St. Matt. v. 39, 40. [22] St. Matt. v. 41.
[23] St. Matt. v. 45. [24] St. Matt. vi. 1, 2.

perfect indifference to the opinions of men. A heart fixed on God is true to His service, and the nature of the service depends on its direction. Jesus illustrated it by the object towards which desire turns, whether the treasures upon earth, the form of Eastern wealth, the costly raiment with its silver and gold embroidery corrupted by the moth and the wear and tear of time,[25] or the incorruptible character formed by true service with the single eye for God's glory. He said, "The lamp[26] of the body is the eye," and if the shining be clear,[27] presenting a well-defined object to the mind for the spiritual discernment of right and wrong, and for act to be the same as desire, the whole life will be true and the heart will not be divided; but if the spiritual faculty be overshadowed by secret deceit, the lower desires and grosser passions will appear without restraint, and the life that might have been light will be shrouded in gloom. No man, Jesus said, can serve[28] two masters; he will drift in one direction or another, either enlightened and sanctified by the Spirit of God in His service, or the slave of his own baser nature.

A direct inference follows this declaration of true service: that those who belong to God and live in obedience to His will need not be anxious about their maintenance. Jesus bade them consider the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, and, as He spoke, the life in the air above and the gorgeous array of life around reminded them of the providence of the Eternal Father Who knew their pressing needs and supplied them.

He closed this part of His discourse with the exhortation to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and promised that all other things would be added unto them. The seeking was not so much in the activity of work as the asking

[25] βρῶσις = rust; not the rust of metals, but decay from wear and tear.

[26] λύχνος, translated light, is lamp. For its synonymous use see also Prov. xx. 27.

[27] ἁπλοῦς, translated single, means clear.

[28] δουλεύειν = not merely to serve, but to be the slave of the one he serves, belonging to him and obeying him entirely.

in prayer, and the pattern prayer He gave them was on these lines: first the concerns of God, and then the needs of man.

Further guidance followed relating to the cultivation of the sensitiveness of their own consciences instead of the consideration of the consciences of others, and for this work He told them to seek the necessary help by prayer. He showed them that God's giving is through His loving, that gifts are the overflow of love. Indiscriminate giving[29] is not inculcated by the measure of the gift; it is the law of hospitality which is brought under observation in all its purity to direct men to the source of all good things. The good measure He prescribed is the overflow, the outward form of the inward spirit expressed in the care for others' welfare.

When a man buys corn the full measure he expects is the legal amount that satisfies; but a generous man shakes the *tabbeh* containing it, presses drown the grain, and pours more on the top of it until the corn runs over the side.[30] It is this overflow that represents the better life, something more than mere justice; it is the love in life's dimensions. All God's gifts for man in the natural world come from the bosom of the earth; they spring up and overflow, and men gather their abundance. In the ordinary life of the East the hospitable man keeps open house, a guest-chamber is prepared for all who seek his dwelling, and it is no strain on friendship for a friend or neighbour to ask in time of need, and receive in large measure, a generous response.[31] The true man recognizes that all he owns, he owes; he is simply the trustee, a means of transmission. He

[29] St. Luke vi. 38. "Give into your bosom." The only receptacle a man possesses is the bosom, the expansive folds of his inner garment above the belt, in which he carries the articles he has purchased.

[30] St. Luke vi. 38, 45.

[31] St. Matt. vii. 7. When I first went to Jerusalem I saw with surprise a stranger carrying from my house a tray containing cups, saucers, food and all the accessories for a party. On enquiry I found a neighbour had unexpectedly received some friends, and, having nothing to set before them, asked for a supply, and my housekeeper responded according to the custom (Author).

could not give unless he had received, and as he receives he gives.

The Sermon on the Mount closed with the parable of the Two Houses, intended to enforce the necessity of doing as the natural consequence of hearing. The position of a city set on a hill shows that the inhabitants are capable of estimating a right choice of a site for their dwellings. Their desirable situation is further enhanced by their security. A good foundation follows the wise choice of the site, and the building at the top or side of a hill is raised on the solid rock and built of stone to withstand the wind and weather on its exposed position. In the lowlands and the plains where stone is scarce, and the climate less severe, a house is often raised on sand and built of mud. It is ill fitted to resist the tempests of rain which in winter sometimes deluge the land, and houses without a sure foundation and a firm structure are swept away. A wise choice and the right foundation are the essential features of a good dwelling.[32]

[32] St. Matthew added to the Sermon on the Mount various utterances of Jesus at other times which form part of His revelation of God's will to man.

CHAPTER XVII

THE LORD'S PRAYER

A DIFFERENCE had evidently been perceived by the disciples between the well-known prayers of the Jews, the prayers of John the Baptist, and the manner of their Lord's praying. And they asked Him to teach them how to pray. In response to their request, He gave them the pattern prayer inserted by St. Matthew in his record of the Sermon on the Mount to show there is some connection between the power of prayer and the principles of the perfect life.

God created man as a creature of need to institute the connection, and whenever a real attempt is made to seek Him it issues from the inmost springs of life to the Unseen Power from which life outflows. Men have prayed through the centuries, not always at the command of the word of God in the Bible, but instinctively and inevitably as the child cries to the parent for attention and support.

Prayer is not merely the admission of man's need: it is the recognition of a Being outside himself Who is more able to supply it, and through prayer he enters into correspondence and companionship with such a Being.

The great Lord Bacon taught the world that the secret of power in nature is correspondence with its laws, and men have by experience proved his statements to be true. It was necessary first to discover the laws, and when found apply them, and their application set great forces in operation. Thus it is a part of God's purpose in the Kingdom of the earth to include man in His scheme for making His will in nature known. Something is expected from man, and within certain limits the way the world goes on depends on his acting in correspondence with the laws which reveal God's will for him in the processes of nature.

It is equally necessary for men to know God's will in the Kingdom of Heaven for carrying out the Divine purpose in the conduct of human life, and the object of prayer is to establish a correspondence with the laws of the Kingdom of Heaven by intercourse with God.

Jesus disclosed the true relationship between man and God which justifies prayer in the Sermon on the Mount, when He said: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," [1] and declared that "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." [2] He summoned those whom He called into fellowship with Himself for instruction in the higher life of righteousness, and showed them in His prayer how a knowledge of God's will might be obtained to maintain it. Prayer is not, therefore, a mere incident of life; it constitutes for man the mysterious force that moves towards the Unseen and Eternal Will for its support and direction.

Our Lord's Prayer, like the Decalogue, consists of two parts, and it is somewhat similar in arrangement. The first table of the law concerns man's duty towards God; the first part of the Lord's prayer belongs to His glory. The second table of the law deals with man's duty to his neighbour; and the second part of the Lord's Prayer treats of his needs.

Jesus taught His disciples first to enter into the presence-chamber of the King, and there become educated into the Name, the Kingdom, and the will of the King, before they could offer their petition. They were to postpone the prayer for their needs until the rule of Heaven had been ascertained for its observance in the law of human conduct. Without a profound sense of the presence of God man can never enter into any form of relationship with Him. It is only through the intimacy of fellowship that His character is exhibited, and it is in this intimacy that secrets are disclosed. There must be a mutual regard, and sure confidence between One and an-

[1] St. Matt. vi. 33. [2] St. Matt. v. 20.

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are

Luke XVIII: 11

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

Our Father which art in heaven

Matthew VI: 9

other, before the innermost thought is transmitted, and the will made known.

They were to begin by solemnly invoking God in His character of Father. This is the distinctive privilege of those who believe on His Son, "for God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father." [3] What they asked, and the expectation with which they made their petition, depended on what they thought of God. If they realized the fact of the Fatherhood of God, then, as His children, they would have confidence in His care and His responsibility for their welfare.

They were to qualify the Fatherhood of God by the addition of the words "Which art in heaven." Heaven was not meant in the local sense of place, but the sphere of moral and spiritual excellence, and referred to character, and of such they were to speak in terms of altitude. As it is the state in which God abides, they were to approach Him by an uplift of the soul for their aspiration to enter into the family characteristics of the Eternal. Heaven means harmony, and the human spirit can only be in tune with the Divine when it partakes of the Divine character. Affinity with the Divine Father implies a likeness to the Divine character, and when a man has God for Father, and heaven for character, he will have man for brother. This relationship disposes altogether of the selfishness of the individual, and men are united into a common brotherhood with mutual interests. Man's conduct depends on what he thinks of God; it is idle to suppose that any idea of God will do, that a man may believe what he likes; what a man believes he becomes. The disciples saw Him revealed in His Son, His character was impressed upon them by His life, and it gradually reproduced itself in them by correspondence with His will, and they were taught to believe what was true about the character of God, and to express it in their reverence for His name in the words "Hallowed be Thy Name."

In the next petition, "Thy Kingdom come," it is well to

[3] Gal. iv. 6.

observe there are two features in a Kingdom for the benefit of its subjects: order and harmony; that lawlessness destroys order and wilfulness ruins harmony. The idea of a Kingdom is thus often obscured but not overthrown. What the disciples were to desire in this petition was the coming of the Kingdom in the hearts of men, and its extension throughout the world, so that order and harmony might prevail in the society of men. The organized society established when Jesus ordained the twelve Apostles represented the visible Kingdom of God on earth, into which every believer is admitted as a citizen; it is the Kingdom of Heaven when its members are subject to the rule of the Divine King. On earth it is in process, and will finally be complete. For this great achievement, the completion of God's rule among men, they were to pray that the supremacy of the will of God, as it is in heaven, may become an open and acknowledged fact in the life of man on earth. This would mean entering into correspondence with the Divine will, and there naturally would follow a humble submission to it, and the disposition to be directed by it, and the knowledge that by the will of the Father the needs of His children are supplied.

"Give us this day our daily bread"; that is, bread for the approaching day, follows as the natural request of the child who has confidence in the Father's care and the certainty of His providence. Every morning a fresh supply is baked sufficient for the day and that day only. No bread is ever kept in the country districts of Palestine beyond the night, and generally new bread is made for every meal. In the towns, where life is more complex and business affairs interfere with domestic interests, the supply of bread is obtained from shops, and sold in the streets to men away from home.

The petition, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," recognizes that no man can suppose he can live in Divine favour while he remains selfish and ungenerous towards his fellow-men. It is evident that Jesus wished His disciples to pray for forgiveness in the sense of having in their hearts

the consciousness that God had nothing against them, that from a cleansed heart there would flow a willing service of gratitude and love as the free bounty of the Divine Father.

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." The petition in the Lord's Prayer is for power to be kept from spiritual sloth and thoughtlessness, that disaster might be averted which otherwise would overtake them. Temptation is here dealt with as suffering inflicted on the careless for their neglect to watch. It is best interpreted by the words our Lord used in the garden of Gethsemane to His disciples, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." [4] Some temptations are necessary for wholesome discipline, others overwhelm the unwary with serious trouble. Evil exists in so many forms, behind the visible there are invisible forces which the disciples might not expect, and prayer for deliverance is necessary for help.

In the course of our Lord's lessons in prayer He treats of the need of earnestness in a striking parable of a man who went to his friend at midnight, and, knocking at his door, asked for bread to give to guests who had arrived late. A voice from within was raised in excuse that he was in bed, but the persistence of the suppliant succeeded when friendship failed.[5]

It is not the character of the selfish neighbour that is here exhibited for instruction, but the character of the prayer of the man who sought his assistance. Perseverance is enjoined, and God's answer to prayer is given by a further illustration of the quality of His gifts, nothing He bestows being useless like a stone, or injurious like a serpent.[6]

Jesus also showed God's disposition towards man by His appeal to the heart of man at his highest and best, saying, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" [7]

[4] St. Matt. xxvi. 41.
[5] St. Luke xi. 78.
[6] St. Matt. vii. 9, 10.
[7] St. Matt. vii. 11.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE RETURN FROM THE MOUNTAIN

Slowly the crowds dispersed, some of the people following Jesus and the twelve Apostles as they walked down the mountain towards Capernaum. One man, at least, eagerly looked for His return to the city, and he was a Gentile, a soldier in the army of Herod Antipas, who bore a singularly attractive reputation. The Jews said, "he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue"; [1] he loved also his slave.

The healing of the nobleman's son, whom he probably knew, as both of them were in the same service, doubtless suggested the means he sought for the recovery of his sick servant. When the elders of the synagogue heard of his desire to send to Jesus they volunteered to intercede for him, presumably as a mark of esteem for their benefactor, and a natural eagerness to sustain the idea of their own importance by the exercise of their influence. His own message to Jesus was in striking contrast to the method adopted by the rulers. They went to Jesus and spoke of the centurion's worth; [2] he abandoned all thought of himself; his humility was as profound as the strength of his faith. He said: "I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. . . . When Jesus heard it He marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." [3] His servant was healed in the self-same hour.

The centurion's faith did not necessarily imply the recognition of the Divinity of our Lord as we understand it; such faith generally follows experience of His Person and work; but there is evidence enough for us to assume that it was different from the usual faith of the people in His miraculous power.

[1] St. Luke vii. 5. [2] St. Luke vii. 4, 5. [3] St. Matt. viii. 8–10.

His reason for his willingness to accept the word of Jesus is the clue, and the statement of his position indicates the commencement of a process which culminated in his belief in an ability derived from a Divine source. As a man under the authority of Roman dominion the centurion admitted the existence of a power by which his word became law to the men under his command; he believed in the authority of might. A simple illustration of this kind of power and a similar faith in it may be seen today in the way a London policeman regulates the traffic of the streets. Watch him at a crossing, and there is a man under authority; his uplifted hand has a power behind it which stops all progress in a particular direction. That is the authority of might, of the power of the law of England, which compels a man against his will to stand and wait. The same man with the same hand may be without authority at home, but in the discharge of his duty he has above him and behind him an authority which all men respect and obey, by the exercise of their faith in an unseen power.

This form of authority was familiar to the centurion; he saw it in the obedience of his men. Associated with this idea of the representation of force was the pagan conception of a god. In a heathen mind "gods" were simply deified forces. From this low standard the centurion had advanced to a higher plane of faith through his contact with the Jews; he recognized in the authority of their Scriptures the power of a Supreme Being governing their actions on moral principles, and the Scribes as the expounders of the written word spoke by authority — they believed in the letter if not in the spirit. He also believed in the Divine law, and he now advances further and mounts higher to a belief in a Divine Person with a power to heal by His word. The progressive stages of the centurion's faith are seen in his idea of the practice of power: he spoke under authority, the Scribes spoke by authority, Jesus spoke with authority.

The admission of the centurion gladdened the heart of Jesus; it was the most complete acknowledgment He had received,

and served Him for an illustration to widen the view of the Kingdom of Heaven for His disciples to learn more of the universal application of the Gospel. Admission into the Kingdom of Heaven by faith is here emphasized, and the ultimate exclusion of those who might naturally have expected to become partakers of its benefits is declared as a consequence of their inability to appreciate their spiritual importance. It is in the fellowship of the spirit that a man joins the festive gathering, and not as the natural heir of the patriarchs. He said: "I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven. But the children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." [4]

No sooner was it known that Jesus had arrived in the city than, even before He had time to eat, He was assailed by certain Scribes from Jerusalem, who had evidently been sent by the rulers to co-operate with the authorities of the towns by the lake in seeking for a case against Him. It was soon found in a miracle that He wrought. A blind and dumb lunatic was brought to Jesus, and He healed him. Immediately the people, in their amazement, said, "It was never so seen in Israel." [5] And their admiration so enraged the Pharisees that they accused Jesus of being in league with the devil. In the midst of the controversy the mother of Jesus arrived with His brethren, and a message was sent to Him of their desire to see Him. The stir He had created in the country, and the conflicts in which He was engaged with the rulers of the Jews, no doubt disturbed them. It was becoming clear to those who were not absorbed in their attention to Jesus that there was danger ahead. His increasing favour with the multitude embittered the Scribes and Pharisees, their opposition grew in the same ratio as the esteem of the people. Every attempt that was made to destroy His influence rebounded on His assailants, and their feelings became more inflamed towards

[4] St. Matt. viii. 11, 12. [5] St. Matt. ix. 33.

Him. Some people, no doubt, looked upon Him as a Person whose enthusiasm was likely to develop into formidable dimensions, overthrow existing institutions, and involve Himself and His friends in ruin. Various accounts of His movements would be circulated, attempts made to attribute motives altogether out of keeping with His disposition, and His relatives in the flesh, anxious for His safety, may have desired to remove Him from danger and persuade Him to abandon His enterprise. But all the ideas relating to the reason for their request to see Him arise from mere conjecture, and have no more foundation than the usual source of Eastern rumour. There is no reason whatever to suppose that His mother, who alone knew the nature of His birth, should fear disaster. His response to the message He received is further proof of the character of the Kingdom, and His true relations, He stated, were those who were united to Him by the fellowship of the Spirit.

A Visit to Nain and John the Baptist's Message

Jesus never allowed controversy to interfere with His work. Whenever opposition appeared He met it with candour and courage, then He withdrew to continue His labour in a more acceptable quarter. A change of place meant another opportunity. His day of life was passing quickly, and He knew the night was coming. Progress had to be made with the enterprise to which He was committed, and the Twelve men attached to His Person instructed in their part of it.

Events followed each other in rapid succession; sometimes we have them preserved in the order of their occurrence, at other times no sequence is given, only isolated incidents are recorded, and these apparently bear no relation to those which precede or follow them in the Gospel story. A serious difficulty is occasionally encountered when the Evangelists vary the circumstances without assigning a cause, and we are left to our own consideration for fixing their place in the narrative. This may often be ascertained by the course of teaching our Lord adopted and the methods He employed. His

visit to Nain, for instance, appears to have no connection with other places in the neighbourhood, as if He went there for a particular purpose; but it no doubt comprised only the chief part, and not all the incidents in His itinerary. The antagonism of the rulers in Capernaum and the anxiety of His relatives, were the primary reasons for His journey. Nain is nearly twenty miles from Capernaum, and the easier road is by the sea past Tiberias. As Jesus seems to have avoided this city of Herod Antipas, another route would have been selected over Kurn Hattin, and several villages lay between the mountain above the lake and the little town of Nain. Turning south from the main road to Cana a village was passed, now called Lubieh, by the way leading to the broad caravan track from Damascus to Samaria and the western sea. This highway, round the foot of Tabor, an isolated mountain like a huge mole-hill, skirted pleasant woodland scenery, with shady recesses and secluded dells, where nestled under the steep mountain-side the village of Deborah, the great Hebrew prophetess. The same road led to Endor (Ain Dur), on the slope of the ridge of little Hermon, which Saul crossed on his fateful journey from Gilboa on the eve of his fall, when in his despair he consulted the witch. On the edge of the hill stood the city of Nain.

Many disciples and much people were with Jesus, and such a following must have attracted considerable attention. The inhabitants of the country-side and the travellers along the road, accustomed to the sight of pilgrim caravans, might have seen in this procession a development of the popular movement established by the great Preacher Whose utterances had been eagerly discussed and disseminated. There had been Hebrew prophets whose authority and influence had left their mark on the national history, but none of them had ever dared to utter words so authoritative and with such self-confidence as the Man of Nazareth. And His appearance with a retinue soon after His discourse on the perfect life, was evidence of the

desire of His followers to learn more of its character and see more of the power of Jesus.

Crowds move slowly in the East; the people take no account of time, and it is not likely that Jesus reached Nain on the day He started from the lake-shore. The incident related by the Evangelist, St. Luke, is an indication of the hour of the day. Burials take place either in the early morning or the evening. A corpse is never kept more than a few hours after death. If it occurs towards nightfall the body is buried on the following morning, and if in the earlier part of a day the event happens, the remains are committed to the grave in the evening. As Jesus and His followers approached the city a sorrowful procession met them outside the gate. At the head of the mournful company He noticed a grief-stricken widow. Behind her, wrapped in a winding-sheet on a bier, lay the body of her only son, conveyed for interment in the last resting-place of the village fathers. With infinite pity for the bereaved mother Jesus told her not to weep, ordered those who bore the body of her son to stop, and, stretching out His hand, He touched the bier and said unto the dead youth, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And Jesus delivered him to his mother." [6]

The people that saw the miracle were moved with superstitious fear. Slowly recovering from their surprise at the momentous spectacle, they became wild with enthusiasm, and cried, "A great prophet is risen up among us; and, that God hath visited His people." Vain sentimental hopes filled their hearts, but the old spirit remained unmoved. Jesus saw that no real apprehension of the truth He came to teach them had been received, it was their national pride which gained a fresh vision to substantiate their false Messianic dreams. Something more was in store for them. While Jesus was engaged in dealing with the critical situation, messengers came from John the Baptist, confined in the gloomy fortress of Machærus,[7]

[6] St. Luke vii. 14, 15.

[7] Josephus, *Ant.* Book XVIII. chap. v. 2.

on the borders of the desert to the north of the Dead Sea. The great prophet, perplexed by the ordeal through which he was passing, brooded in his prison cell. His cherished hopes of the Messiah were now overshadowed by the stronghold that kept his body within its narrow walls. His expectations had not been realized, and doubts seem to have taken possession of his soul. Surely the man who had prepared for the Kingdom, proclaimed the advent of its King, who had heard the voice of God announce the appearing of His Son, could not have been mistaken and his life and work a failure. It is a strange fact of life that many a servant of God looks on his service with an agitated mind, when events do not happen in the way anticipated, when his position has changed and its sun is setting in the shadow of abandonment. The triumph of good for which John had laboured, the victory of right for which he had fought, no longer inspired him. He had prepared for the glory of the Kingdom to become manifest, and now he lies with his life in peril and his soul in gloom, and there is no Kingdom at all. Wrong still reigns, and the One he thought would overthrow its dominion allows it to take its course. It seemed to John as if his life and work had been a mistake, and what he had thought was the Spirit of God inspiring his efforts was, after all, the emotion of an enthusiastic reformer. Amidst his doubts there was still his noble soul; he doubted, but he never despaired. Man is a failure only when he is content to doubt. John was not content, and there lay the spirit of victory temporarily overshadowed by circumstances, which test the brave and true but never vanquish them. He appealed to Christ. He was determined to know the truth, and he sent a message to the only One Who could satisfy him. No honest doubter ever prayed to Christ in vain. Doubts are various, and arise from curious sources. Many cherished hopes have been formed on insecure foundations, hasty judgments based on shifting prospects, and even prayers are not always answered in the way desired. John was perplexed because he was impatient. In his impetuous zeal he

had hoped for immediate results. The answer Christ gave His two disciples best fitted the situation in which the Baptist was placed, and furnished him with evidence to form his own judgment. It was not exactly the message John expected; the declaration of a simple affirmative might have been more plain, but it would have been less convincing. Jesus knew that John believed on Him as the Messiah; what he needed was a right understanding of His Mission. Like all the Jews, the ideal for which he looked was what he wanted; it differed from the one they hoped to see, and also from what had been revealed to him. But the distinction was more in process than in essence in its relation to the Messiah. His work had commenced, but it was too slow for the passionate eagerness of the prophet, who wished to see the Kingdom of righteousness and truth established, as the Jews longed for a King who would overthrow the power of Rome and make their nation great and free. John could doubt no longer that Jesus was the Christ when his messengers returned with the answer to his appeal. Jesus said to them: "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached." He was the Helper of the helpless and the Champion of the oppressed. And, with a tender personal note, He added: "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me." [8]

When they had gone He spoke to the people in great commendation of John. He knew that they must have thought the prophet had wavered in his faith, that his strong spirit was broken by his confinement, and for John's sake and their own perverse and hasty judgment, He reminded them of the days when the stern voice of the brave preacher thrilled the multitudes in the wilderness. He said, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? a reed shaken with the wind?" There had been no sign of an irresolute will, no faltering of purpose in the strong and courageous prophet. He contin-

[8] St. Luke vii. *22, 23.*

ued: "But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled and live delicately are in King's courts." [9] John was in prison because he dared to rebuke a King.

It was a noble vindication of the character of John. Jesus concluded His eulogy with the further description: "This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee. For I say unto you, among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." [10]

This judgment was not pronounced so much on the man as his circumstances. In his capacity for apprehending the law and keeping it he was greater than the men before him, but less than those who had perceived the larger hope of the Kingdom of Heaven and had entered into the higher life of love. He belonged to the old and inferior dispensation of law. The new era was superior in its elevation and outlook, and its members, therefore, greater from the circumstances of their time rather than the nature of their character.

Those who had been John's disciples were pleased with the approbation of Jesus; the Pharisees and lawyers disliked it. As the accredited teachers of the law, they resented John's assumption of a position which belonged to them. Their unreasonable minds and peevish dispositions Jesus detected, and denounced by two familiar illustrations. He compared them with the children in the market-place, the little mimics of their elders, whose playground was the bazaar, where they acted first the solemn and sombre funeral procession for their playmates, and, this being unsatisfactory, the game was changed to suit them, and a wedding procession acted, with its gay music and great hilarity. Still they were displeased, and they would neither join in one game nor the other.

First John the Baptist came, with his ascetic mien and solemn voice calling the people to repentance; but there was

[9] St. Luke vii. 25. [10] St. Luke vii. 27, 28.

no moral depth in their feelings, and no vital strength in their purpose to change their ways. They turned from the melancholy aspect of his message to the more social element of Jesus, expecting His teaching to be more pleasant; but they found it harder than John's. They accused the Baptist of having a devil,[11] and Jesus as a gluttonous man and a winebibber, and, like sullen children, resented all efforts to interest them. They could not see that truth appears in various forms, is presented in different ways, that it might appeal to different people. Although truth may wear a dissimilar dress the seeker after it will recognize it and acknowledge it; thus wisdom is justified of her children. But they were not the children of wisdom; they were foolish and inconsistent.

Simon the Pharisee's Supper

On His return from the brief missionary tour in the district of Nain Jesus was invited to supper by Simon the Pharisee, who, apparently unlike so many of his class, was a man of wide sympathies and tolerant views. Having heard of the fame of Jesus, he thought it would be well for him to show an interest in the great Teacher. We are enabled to see in this incident and what else occurred at the feast the position Jesus seemed to occupy before the men of His time, and also His own attitude towards the people. The dignity of His bearing, the urbanity of His speech, and the confidence in Himself, offered a favourable contrast to the conduct of His host, one of the leaders of the social circle of the cities on the lake-shore.

Although he had invited Jesus, he did not receive Him with the marks of courtesy observed in the treatment of an honoured guest. There was a sense of superiority in his manner which spoilt the good feeling his invitation appeared to exhibit. It became more noticeable in the difference of esteem shown by a woman who had followed Jesus. Her service attracted the Pharisee's attention and touched his sense of propriety.

Simon's feast and Simon's Guest drew the people from the

[11] St. Luke vii. 33.

street, and amongst them came a woman of unenviable notoriety. She passed into the courtyard, with great courage forced her way through the respectable people assembled there to reach the *lewan* where Jesus reclined at supper. Such a venture is almost inconceivable. It would have been entirely so if he had been an ordinary man. She dare not then have made the attempt. But He was so different from ordinary men, and she evidently knew. She knew that he was the Friend of Sinners, and knowing this she made her great adventure. She had followed Him and, before all the people, the friends of the Pharisee in the guest chamber, and his followers in the courtyard, she fell at the feet of Jesus, washed them with her penitential tears and wiped them with the long tresses of her hair. Even more, she loved Him so, she was neither afraid nor ashamed to display her affection; she kissed His feet and with a precious balm annointed them. The Pharisee gazed in profound astonishment at the woman's act; he reviewed his knowledge of Jesus with a critical mind, and concluded that He could not be so great a Teacher as might be expected from His reputation when unable to discern the character of the woman at His feet, or He would have turned from her with disgust. His thoughts were visible in his face, and Jesus saw them assuming a definite shape, and said: "Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee. And he saith: Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed him five hundred pence and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell Me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said: I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And He said unto him: Thou hast rightly judged. And He turned to the woman and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet: but she hath washed My feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest Me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils

Luke VIII: 2

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

Jesus . . . sat by the seaside. And great multitudes were gathered unto him

Matthew XIII: 1, 2

didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven: for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven." [12]

Christ's gentle rebuke for the Pharisee's behaviour, although His argument was accepted as true, does not at first appear to have affected his indifference. The self-righteous Simon could see no relation in it to himself until the distinction was made more apparent by direct reference. Even then he was impervious to any feeling of necessity for forgiveness. Satisfied with his uprightness, he could see a difference between his own conduct and the open shame of flagrant sin in the woman, and it served to keep the allusion to his own state from him. His censure of the sinner at the feet of Jesus hardened his impenitent heart, and kept it closed from the love that is kindled by forgiveness. The sense of sin in the woman unlocked the floodgates of her tears, and the tenderness of Jesus to penitents was shown in His final blessing: "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." [13]

Surprise at the words of Jesus stirred the other guests. In silent amazement they said within themselves, "Who is this Who forgiveth sins also?" The revelation Jesus had conveyed to them by His manner and His words of a power within Him which He calmly claimed for His own use was a shock they could not explain.

Ancient church tradition has always identified Mary Magdalene with the sinner who washed her Saviour's feet. When first she is introduced to us in the Gospel story [14] she is described as "Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils." Harlotry was usually associated with demoniacal possession, and, seven being a complete number, it is a sign of the utter abandonment of a woman to this form of sin. There is no valid reason for the belief in the identity, beyond the name of the place of her abode.

[12] St. Luke vii. 36–48. [13] St. Luke vii. 50. [14] St. Luke viii. 2.

A squalid village, known as El Megdel, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, with a solitary palm-tree standing by it to improve its appearance, is all that remains of ancient Magdala to recall the scene of Simon's supper.

A similar incident recorded by St. John of Mary of Bethany has led some people to believe the two Marys are really one person. But this is an assumption that disregards the use of proper names for establishing the identity of different people. It is a common practice in Palestine to speak of a person with the name of his or her native place, *e.g.* Ruth the Moabitess, Judas Iscariot, Mary Magdalene, and our Lord as Jesus of Nazareth.

CHAPTER XIX

TEACHING BY PARABLES

Teaching by parables is peculiarly Oriental and eminently suitable to the mind glowing with a luxuriant imagination. An Eastern man is not capable of perceiving without illustration; his language is figurative, his ideas are represented by symbols, he always wishes to see in order to understand. The natural imagery used in ordinary conversation appeals more directly to him than a simple statement, and the parable is another vehicle for conveying abstract truth in concrete form. It would have been strange if Jesus had declined to utilize in His teaching forms of expression in common use amongst the people. By adopting this means of imparting knowledge of the Kingdom He recognized the customary manner of thinking and speaking, and presented His great truths in the familiar objects which naturally appealed to the sympathy of His hearers.

The surprise exhibited by His disciples at His method was due to its use before the multitude. Teachers generally spoke in parables to pupils who were under a course of instruction, as the parable was a more serious contribution to the mind than the symbol. It was chiefly for the sake of the Apostles our Lord spoke in parables; He told them that the deeper things, the mysteries of the Kingdom, were for the initiated, and to them they would be revealed. As for the multitude, those who were indisposed towards the truth,[1] who did not want to know lest they should turn from their ways and be healed, they would fail to understand; others, anxious to learn, might perceive and know. The parables were not meant to put truth out of sight altogether, but to hide it for men to search for it, and prize it when found. There is always evi-

[1] St. Matt. xiii. 15, Revised Version.

dence in our Lord's teaching of His desire for all people to discover His meaning, and when His use of words is compared with the extravagant language usually employed in the East, nothing seems more conspicuous in His treatment of the subjects He set before the people than His simple yet sublime manner of dealing with their ordinary speech. His language, even when compared with the language of the Psalms, the Song of Solomon, and the book of Job, is remarkably superior in its simplicity and beauty. A more surprising feature still is seen in His treatment of the parable. He made use of the Oriental method, and in it exhibited the universal mind. He presented His truths in Eastern dress, but with such concise an exact expression that the exuberant imagery of the East was changed into the precise language of the West. This alone is the manifestation of a power which a genius from an Eastern village would never have possessed. However great his mind, it would have been incapable of producing thoughts for universal application in a simple form; its excellence would have been shown in the magnificence of their apparel. The originality and force of the methods of Jesus appeal with an authority exceeding human effort. His truth applies to what is elemental in the nature of man, it touches an experience which belongs to all people for all time, and such an experience has in it an element of immortality, and His truth declares to a man new truth about Himself as a germ, a seed, in which there is a force suitable for the regeneration of humanity. His parables are so simple that a child may understand them, and yet they are so profound in their meaning that they never fail to captivate the greatest thinker and furnish him with an inexhaustible store of wisdom.

Parable literally means a comparison. It is a form of speech which embraces facts natural and real in themselves, and presents them in a shape easy to remember, and to transmit to future generations. The form of the parables of Jesus was particularly attractive. All who heard them would instantly recognize their outward appearance, because it was taken from

the circumstances of the place or time in which they were spoken; but only the thoughtful could perceive what they meant. They were not intended to teach the people what to do, but to think and act for themselves. Their picturesque structure was more enduring than mere words, and carried with it a suggestion and association as likely to remain as the objects from whence they were taken.

Parables were chiefly employed by Jesus for instruction in the great principles of the Kingdom of God as a Divine operation, so that men might become agents and not merely spectators. The Kingdom of God was to come without observation, that is without ostentatious display, to be a growth in men and not a creation apart from them. It is necessary to remember the idea which the Teacher of Nazareth had regarding Himself and His Mission when He spake in parables, and to realize the circumstances in which He stood. He began with Himself as a new power introduced to the world of men, and the parables are the means by which He conveyed His message.

A year had passed since He commenced His Mission; crowds of people had seen His work and heard His words. They must have been aware of the general characteristics of the Gospel He came to preach, and were now to be tested. If they had missed the significance of His life in His words and works they might also fail to perceive the meaning of His parables; but those who had gained by His teaching would be further instructed in the sublime truth of the Kingdom of God. This new departure was a notable change in His methods, and followed the declaration of the principles of His Kingdom, which they might have noticed as the rules of His own life. It was another opportunity for all people; it was also a process of sifting whereby those who were earnestly seeking to participate in the way of life He had put before them might find a more intimate approach to Him; the indifferent, failing to perceive, would fall away.

His first parable was spoken by the sea in the glory of the

Galilean spring-time, when all nature enjoyed its new life. A multitude of people had collected round Him on the beach; so close were some of them that it was impossible for all to hear His words. He stepped into a boat, pushed off from the shore, and commenced to speak. Beyond the people were the fields of waving corn, and grass sprinkled with the bright hues of many flowers. Warm, bright weather afforded comfort for the multitude, and their coloured garments enhanced the beauty of the scene before Him.

"Behold," He said, "a sower went forth to sow. And when he sowed some seeds fell by the wayside; and the fowls came and devoured them up. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth; and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." [2]

Happily the old code of agricultural laws survives in the Holy Land; old customs relating to the cultivation of the soil exist today; we can observe carefully the difference between East and West,[3] and we may see that every detail in the parable is correct. It is well to be able to confirm the statements in the Gospels when critics, ignorant of the condition of affairs in the East, say, "There is a want of truthful correspondence to reality, because sowers do not thus waste their seed by scattering it where it is not likely to grow." [4]

In various parts of the country, which have not been invaded by European influence, are small towns and villages, and attached to every one of them are two kinds of land (excluding *wakf*, mosque property), the freehold in gardens, vineyards, and olive-groves; and the rest for the common use of

[2] St. Matt. xiii. 3–9.

[3] This statement refers to the time before the Great War.

[4] Stier, *Reden Jesu*, vol. ii. p. 76, 2nd edition. Quoted by Dean Alford.

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

Behold, a sower went forth to sow

Matthew XIII: 3

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea

Matthew VIII: 26

the people. All freehold land may be recognized by a wall or a cactus hedge around the property, but nothing is seen to indicate the border of a field as the untutored eye gazes over the sweeping landscape.

Every year the agricultural land is allotted to those who desire to till the soil, and, as the number of men participating in the allotment varies annually, there are neither walls nor hedges dividing one field from another. A neighbour's landmark is a temporary provision, and consists of a little heap of stones which can be moved when the next allotment requires a change in the boundary. Each ostensible owner of the common land, holding his field for a year, has little regard for what will in all probability pass from him; his chief desire is to get as much out of it as possible with as little work. The old, well-worn paths, the by-ways of the people's heritage, are scarcely touched by the light plough, and the thorns remain. After the ploughing the sowing begins; there is no cleansing of the field; what the plough cannot perform is left undone, and the sower, with the seed held often in his inner garment, scatters it with his hand over the whole field irrespective of path or thorny scrub. Here and there the rock crust appears with scanty soil upon it, but the sower takes no heed; he sows his seed and waits for the harvest.

Every word that Jesus spoke in His first parable made it plain to the people. They were familiar with every incident in it. Beneath the natural imagery lay concealed the truth they failed to perceive. Even the disciples asked for an explanation; in simple language Jesus made His meaning clear, and left it as seed to grow in their hearts.

It seems probable that all the parables of the Kingdom recorded by St. Matthew in one chapter were not spoken on this occasion; but, as St. Mark declares,[5] "as they were able to hear it." This implies a gradual course of teaching in circumstances suitable for our Lord's purpose. We cannot recognize all the opportunities He seized at the different times, and

5 St. Mark iv. 33.

this is perhaps why the parables are grouped together in the written word where they may be studied at leisure. One parable might have been sufficient for the central theme of His address at one time, unless the similarity of meaning in one or two more ministered to our Lord's aim. He warned the people to be careful about their hearing; the measure of attention is often the measure of understanding, and the possibility of understanding is lost by inattention.[6] There is a power within waiting to be developed by active co-operation with what is heard. The second parable in St. Mark's Gospel appears to have been used to impress upon the people the result of application, and also the encouragement of patience, lest they should expect a rapid growth of the Kingdom of God in their lives, and in the world; and the reference to the candle,[7] the little lamp in common use, was for them to act on what they had received, and for the light to illuminate their minds and reveal to others the life in them.[8]

He said the Kingdom of God is "as if a man should cast seed into the ground." Our Lord is here the Sower. He brings into nature something different from itself, a fruitful germ which calls certain forces into operation for combined action. When the Husbandman has done this, His work is finished. He leaves the seed for the laws of nature to do their part with it. The powers they possess become active without His interference: He waits for the result. "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." [9]

Between the sowing and the reaping [10] the sower is absent from the field, he has nothing more to do with it after the seed is sown until the corn is ripe; he turns his attention to something else. He may watch the progress of his corn, but he

[6] St. Mark iv. 24.
[7] St. Mark iv. 21; St. Luke viii. 16–18.
[8] St. Mark iv. 21, 22.
[9] St. Mark iv. 26–29.
[10] No work is performed in the field after the sowing until the harvest.

does not interfere with it; having sown the seed, he can do no more. His thoughts will often naturally turn towards his field, and he will watch the weather. Day by day he will consider the prospects of his harvest, even on the Sabbath his mind will be occupied with future results. So it is with the Great Sower; His work in the field may be finished, but His anxieties never cease. It is the earth, with the use of its powers, that turns the seed into the harvest, but the earth is subject to influences from above, the sunshine and the rain of heaven nourish it for the powers within it to enable the seed to grow. Without assistance the earth would lose its fertility; if no rain fell the rich nature of the ground would deteriorate, and eventually become a waste; and if there were no sun to shed its welcome rays upon the soil its capacity for production would be destroyed.

The significance of the departure of the Husbandman until the harvest is important to the minds of thoughtful men. Just as the sower of earthly seed is free from active interference with the land after the seed-time, an agent independent of the laws which govern the seed and the soil, the Heavenly Husbandman is a Being outside the realm of human life. His coming threw something new into it which set forward new movements towards a new destiny. It could no more have been reached without His appearing than a harvest can be produced without the sower and his seed. However rich the land, a harvest from it depends on a man with the germ of life in his hand to be committed into the keeping of the soil, and he who sows the seed is above its laws and apart from its nature. So in the world of men and the soil of the human mind, it can only bring to maturity what is sown within it, and the Sower of Divine seed is the Lord from heaven, Who comes with it from above.

The parable illustrates the manifestation of the life of Christ on earth, the Seed in the seed-time of mankind, ripening very gradually in the ages of its history for the great harvest.

The parables, more than anything else in His teaching, reveal the nature and the purpose of the Kingdom of God. Various subjects were selected to explain the meaning of the Kingdom, its effect on those who were enrolled as citizens, and in what they were to occupy themselves. Jesus revealed the great doctrine of the Kingdom of God in His Incarnation; the glorious enterprise began with the presence of God in the form of man. When He appeared in the frail tabernacle of flesh, He expressed the will of God as it might be exhibited in the life of men in perfect obedience to His will, as the rule of God in the heart. When His disciples became His Messengers they were appointed to set up the Kingdom of Heaven on earth; a new fellowship, a society of the best men, working for the best end with the highest motive, was formed on the best principle, the principle which Jesus established in His own life by the operation of His will, the will of God.

He likened the Kingdom of God to leaven,[11] not in its essence but in its action. By a natural and spontaneous process, similar to the contact of the leaven with the dough, a new spirit uplifts and enlarges the life of man. And so the Kingdom of Heaven, the rule of God in the heart of man, reacts on other men, and the new fellowship, giving life for life, transmits through intercourse with men the means for the elevation of mankind. The parable of the Mustard-seed [12] shows the extent of the growth of the Kingdom. In the prolific nature of the soil in the tropical heat of the Jordan Valley, the mustard-plant attains a height so considerable that it reaches the shoulders of a man on horseback.

It was evident from the parable of the Tares [13] that in this new society there would be some that were not of it, not in real fellowship with it, that the enemy of mankind would take advantage of the weakness of human nature, deceive even the elect, and amongst the wheat scatter tares, something that looks like wheat until the ears begin to swell, until the blade

[11] St. Matt. xiii. 33. [12] St. Mark iv. 31. [13] St. Matt. xiii. 36.

brings forth fruit.[14] Then the wheat may be recognized by one single head on the top of the stalk, while the tares, a species of darnel, betray themselves in separate small heads on either side of the stalk, ranged alternately at an equal distance from one another. Their roots being so closely entwined with those of the wheat, the evil cannot be undone until the harvest, when the wheat is separated from the tares.

The most striking feature of the Kingdom of God is the fruit of the Spirit, not the outward form of a society. The Kingdom is within, and when the actions of men accord with the will of God on earth as it is in heaven, the Kingdom has come, and the invisible becomes visible in the life of man.

[14] *Cf.* St. Matt. vii. 16, 20.

CHAPTER XX

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS

The strenuous nature of Christ's labours cannot be estimated by the number of incidents which marked His eventful career. Only when it is possible to follow them in succession are we able to notice the extent of His work, and His willingness to devote His energies, without regard for Himself, to the welfare of the people. However tired He might have been — and the weariness following incessant toil was His lot as Man — He never showed a sign of impatience. Nothing is more wonderful than the serenity of Jesus in the prosecution of His great Mission. His desire to see the establishment of His Kingdom of righteousness and peace was intense. Yet He was never betrayed into agitation. Whilst He kindled a sublime and mighty enthusiasm in others, He proceeded to fulfil His purpose without haste and without pause. His kindness flowed as a stream which ripples in the sunshine over the obstacles in its course. Adverse circumstances seemed only to extend His beneficent work. The source of His love never failed in its supply; it gave fresh evidence every day of the abundant life He came to bestow. One day's work, from sunset to sunset, is plainly marked for us to examine.

After His discourse on the parables of the Sower and the Seed, when the day was drawing to its close, Jesus, anxious to be alone with His disciples, invited them to accompany Him across the lake. He longed for the rest and quietude of the eastern shore, the sparsely populated region between the Decapolitan towns above the low range of hills that stand like a wall by the side of the sea.

As soon as the disciples were ready the sails were set and the boat moved along the face of the water. Tired with the

fatigue of the day, Jesus laid His weary head on a pillow in the stern of the little vessel. Signs of a gathering storm did not keep Him from repose; He slept even when it struck the boat and it was threatened with disaster. A sudden squall peculiar to the Sea of Galilee lashed its waves into a fury, and the tempest, which they knew often brought disaster, frightened the fishermen in charge of the ship. They were familiar with the sea, they knew their peril, and still the Master calmly slept. The billows rolled, the storm grew more furious, and as the waves dashed into the boat it began to fill with water. The disciples in their fear awoke their Lord, crying, "Master, Master, we perish!"

And these were the men whose knowledge of the elements and the laws of nature had taught them to sail on the water. By their own understanding and will they had been many times able to overcome the secret power of nature in the sea. Since their day men have advanced further in their mastery of the deep, and ships in their charge have lived in greater storms than ever ruffled the surface of the lake of Gennesareth. This power has been gained by scientific attainment, which is but a better understanding of natural forces. And the progress of human triumph over the natural elements by this increase in the knowledge of their laws is an indication that more power may be derived from greater knowledge. It has not only dispersed the superstitious ideas regarding these forces of the sea which men ignorantly worshipped as gods, by showing an ability to deal with them, it has also strengthened the faith of those who cross the sea in ships. Such faith was in its infancy when the Galilean fishermen handled their frail vessel in the storm. In their terror of the hurricane that had burst upon them they had forgotten for a moment their sleeping Passenger Who had already exhibited greater power than mortals had ever seen. Realizing their peril, they appealed to Him for help, and their prayer was answered. Slowly He rose from the stern-sheets and rebuked the wind and the waves, saying, "Peace, be still," and "there was a great calm."

Jesus not only knew what was in man, He knew what was in nature, and He displayed His knowledge by His power. He is Lord both of men and of nature. He said unto them, "Where is your faith?" [1] and the men in the boat with Him marvelled, saying, "What manner of Man is this?" He had rebuked them for their "little faith," and their eyes were fixed in wonder on Him. They recognized His ability to save them, but they had no perception of the mystery of Divine power surrounding the angry waters. It was this absence of recognition of God's presence to which Jesus alluded in His rebuke, His disciples' failure to look beyond the things seen by the mortal eye.

On reaching the country of the Gergesenes [2] on the other side of the lake there was no time for rest. No sooner had Jesus and His disciples stepped ashore and climbed the hill above the water than a maniac, wild, and fierce, and naked, rushed toward them, and another hovered near.[3] The weird grandeur of the barren hills harmonized with the wild figure of the man as he stood in the desolate region lit by the myriad stars of the Syrian sky. Even a brave heart might have shrunk from contact with him and turned again to the safety of the boat, and another landing sought for peace and quiet. Sleep was out of the question for Jesus until His work was done and the poor wretch relieved of his terrible affliction. Unsuccessful efforts to bind him showed its severity, and the people attributed his madness to demoniacal possession. Similar ideas prevail in the land today,[4] though not to the same

[1] St. Luke viii. 25. [2] St. Matt. viii. 28.

[3] St. Luke viii. 26. Gadara and Gergesa, the different names given by the Evangelists for the places across the lake, are only confusing to those who are unacquainted with the country. The districts comprised by the names are contiguous, and as the miracle took place in the country between the towns, though nearest to Gergesa, it is not difficult to see how both names were used. When the name Gersa, or Khersa, is said to represent Gerasa instead of Gergesa there is a difficulty, because Gerasa is several days' journey farther south, and quite unlikely to be the correct designation. Gadara, modern Um Keis, was one of the cities of the Decapolis. St. Matt. viii. 25–34; St. Mark v. 1–19; St. Luke viii. 26–39.

[4] The natives of Palestine believe in evil spirits the "jan," the subjects

extent, probably because there are few men so furious that they cannot be restrained. Fear is inspired by the appearance of a maniac, and when it is possible to secure him he is chained. Occasionally one of them escapes to the hills, and wanders in the desert places of the country, until exposure and hunger subdue his tortured spirit and he is taken to a place of refuge. One of these places is a Greek church in the South to which maniacs are chained in the hope that contact with a Christian church will drive out the evil spirit.

Denial of demoniacal possession on the ground that we have advanced in our ideas from the crude notions of the ancients does no dispose of the belief they entertained. And the suggestion that our Lord accommodated Himself to the erroneous fancies of the time is not justified by the narrative. There was no reason why He should have declared His own view of the matter; He evidently took no notice of it, but concerned Himself with the case before Him. This was certainly better for the patient, and all that Jesus considered necessary,

of a sultan whose domain is underground. They admit he is not the devil, "ebliss" or Satan, "Shaitan," but a demon of less importance though not less notorious. Night is the time for the nefarious practices of the "jan" and for all whose deeds are evil. Bad temper is a sure sign of demoniacal possession, and if a woman by her wilfulness causes her husband considerable anxiety he fears "an evil spirit" has entered into her; and excess of passion will remove all doubt. One husband declared he had discovered a way of casting out the demon by firing a pistol over his wife's head; he said the "jan" disliked the smell of the powder; more likely his wife was afraid of the uncertainty of his aim, and that corrected her behaviour. Mischief is another sign, and when ill-temper is followed by a mischievous disposition a man is assured of the presence of the "jan." The difference both of the kind of demon and the extent of his power is only a matter of progress to the Eastern man, and the fury of a madman leaves no doubt in his mind about an evil spirit of Satanic might controlling his movements. A harmless lunatic, on the other hand, is a person whose mind is in heaven; he is not, therefore, responsible for what he may do on earth, and is treated with kindness because he is "holy," and he subsists on the charity of the benevolent. A man has only to do a foolish thing, something that will show he cannot be accountable for his actions, to prove acceptable to the people. Although it may not appear to a Western man that this is a lucrative profession, it has been adopted by those who have a natural disinclination to work and a desire for attention. They need only cut themselves with knives to make the people believe in them.

and it is all that was required. There is nothing in the life of our Lord to show His agreement with the follies of mankind, or what to us in this age, with our education, seems foolish. We have enough evidence in our own experience to prove the existence and power of evil. Gadara was notorious for its licentiousness, and below the hill on which the city stood are remains of the haunts of pleasure of its inhabitants, not far from the place on the opposite hill where Jesus healed the lunatic man. Happily, the worst forms of vice known in modern times do not approach the grossness of the evil when Gadara flourished. Objects of interest discovered in the cities of old have had to be instantly destroyed as unfit to be seen. Where vice is rampant man becomes a veritable beast, even worse, for its instinct furnishes the animal with certain limitations; but, once a man loses control of his disposition to evil by over-indulgence, he becomes possessed with its spirit, and it is not a trespass on credulity to realize the presence of a demon. The Gadarene demoniac was dangerous, and had to be bound, and his passion broke his fetters. We have known evil men whom nothing could bind, neither law nor custom, nor entreaties of friends, nor even the walls of a prison, men who have become the pests of society, whose touch was contamination, and from whom we have shrunk with horror. And wherever we find them we discover their hatred of anything and any one connected with God. They would cry out, "What have I to do with Thee?" And truly they have nothing; evil is so strong in them they hate the good. The maniac answered thus when he appeared before Jesus.[5] Our Lord's object was to cure him, and the method He adopted, I am told by a specialist of repute, is copied now by those who deal with the mentally afflicted. By asking his name, after fixing his attention, our Lord used the most powerful means of recalling his mind to its individuality. Acting in the belief of the origin of his disease, and that he was possessed by devils, he answered, "Legion,"[6] and this answer marked an-

[5] St. Matt. viii. 29. [6] St. Luke viii. 30.

other stage in the process of his cure; he was beginning to think. And, speaking as the agent of the demons within him, he makes a request,[7] and another step is taken. This evidence of gradual change is important as indicating the real nature of the disease, and the nature of the request for the demons to enter into a herd of swine is further testimony — the swine being prohibited by Jewish law, they were abhorrent to the lunatic, and it is not uncommon for lunatics to view things which they consider wrong as objects for destruction. A greater benefit was produced on the diseased mind of the man by granting his request, and it completed the miracle. The sight of the swine rushing in violent terror down a steep place into the sea would confirm and strengthen his belief in his own cure. The treatment of the animals was therefore a factor in the healing of the lunatic.

The keepers of the swine were startled and fled. They spread the news amongst the people in the country of the Gergesenes and the Gadarenes, who quickly gathered in the morning to see the strange Visitor, and before their eyes was the wild maniac clothed [8] and in his right mind sitting at the feet of Jesus. But they thought more of their property lost in the sea than the cure of the wretched man, and, fearing further trouble, entreated Jesus to go away, preferring their pigs and their passions to the Restorer of the soul. While they begged Him to depart, the new man asked to go with Him; but He bade the saved demoniac remain, saying, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee and hath had compassion on thee." He was saved to serve, to become Christ's witness in the country of the Gergesenes and the Gadarenes.

Jesus and His disciples returned to their vessel and sailed across the lake to the shores of Gennesareth. Recognizing the boat, numbers of people waited on the beach to welcome Him; amongst them was Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, more

[7] St. Luke viii. 32.

[8] The outer garment, the *abyah*, of one of the disciples would answer the purpose.

anxious than the rest,[9] "for he had a little daughter about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying." His earnest appeal to Jesus found a ready response. Nothing that the rulers had done, neither their violent opposition nor their virulent abuse, interfered with the course of His love for the suffering; and, what is perhaps more surprising, the rulers, who as a body were His foes, seemed to know that Jesus bore no ill-will, that He loved His enemies. He followed the ruler along the shore, but His progress was impeded by the multitude. They were so glad to see Him walk along the road again, to see His face, observe His tender gaze, and perchance a smile in their direction. Something in that stately presence attracted them which they had never found in a man before. When the truth fell from His lips, that from another teacher might have sounded hard in its stern reality, His grace tempered its expression without lessening its power. His great kindness won their hearts. In the dense throng was a woman groaning under a bodily infirmity which all the medical skill of that day had been unable to alleviate. Hope deferred for twelve years had made her heart as sick as her body; first one physician, then another, had tried to cure her, and all had failed. She struggled hard to reach the leading Figure in the crowd,[10] saying within herself, "If I may but touch His garment I shall be whole." Her efforts were at last successful; she gained a place behind His flowing robe on which the better Jews wore the fringes that distinguished their nation, and, stretching out her trembling hand, she touched one of the four tassels of blue that hung from the edge of His outer garment (*abyah*), and immediately she was healed. The fact upon which the Evangelists direct attention is that the woman touched only the hem of the garment. All the writers agree on the nature of her malady, that it was an issue of blood. The slight differences appearing in their account of the incident bear the indelible stamp of truth, and show the profound

[9] St. Luke viii. 42.

[10] St. Matt. ix. 20, 21; St. Mark v. 25; St. Luke viii. 43.

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

He went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose

Matthew IX: 25

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

And looking up to heaven, he blessed them

Luke IX: 16

impression it made on the minds of the Apostles. St. Mark alludes to the failure of the doctors in unflattering terms, that she "had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." St. Luke the physician admits that the members of his profession were baffled. "Jesus said, Who touched Me? [11] And Peter and they that were with Him said, Master, the multitude throng Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me? And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched Me, for I perceive that virtue hath gone out of Me."

And the woman, hearing what was said, confessed what she had done, and what had happened to her, before all the people, and Jesus said unto her, "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." [12]

A slight delay, and what seemed a fatal delay, had been caused by this incident; a messenger arrived from the ruler's house to inform Jairus that his daughter was dead, and he need not trouble the Master any further.[13] Now Jairus had seen a miracle, and, what is more, he had heard that the way to reach God was by faith, and that actual contact with God is through faith, the touch of the woman represented her faith, and the ruler became more capable of blessing by the lesson he had received on the way home. When he heard the sad news of the messenger, followed by the words of Jesus, "Fear not, only believe," hope would grow strong again within him.

When Jesus reached the house all the Oriental signs of mourning were visible. He found minstrels and wailing women making the usual noise; not content with natural grief, artificial means were employed to deepen the feelings by moaning for the lost, and to soothe those who were left behind. Men and women are hired to demonstrate grief by customary symbols, beating their breasts, tearing their hair, throwing ashes on their heads, and shrieking in tones of sorrow. Jesus went in with Peter, James, and John, and turned the people out of

[11] St. Luke viii. 48.
[12] St. Luke viii. 48.
[13] St. Mark v. 41.

the house, saying, "Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth"; and they laughed Him to scorn. Then, in the presence of His disciples and the child's parents, He took her by the hands and said with great tenderness, "Talitha cumi" "My little lamb" (which has been translated "Damsel"), "I say unto thee, arise." [14] And straightway the damsel arose and walked. He added the usual warning that His work should not be mentioned, and told the father and mother to give their daughter something to eat.

The work of the day was not yet done. On leaving the ruler's house two blind men followed Him,[15] crying, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us"; and when He entered another dwelling, probably Peter's, they waited at the entrance until Jesus called them to Him. He asked them if they believed in His ability to restore their sight, and, receiving a satisfactory answer, "He touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you," and charged them to see that no man knew it; but they forgot His injunction in the joy of their recovery, and spread His fame abroad in all that country.

[14] St. Mark v. 41.

[15] St. Matt. ix. 27-31.

CHAPTER XXI

THE MISSION OF THE APOSTLES

After the healing of the daughter of Jairus, Jesus left Capernaum for His old home, and paid a second visit to Nazareth. His arrival was unwelcome and His reception was cold; a strong feeling of opposition showed plainly that the inhabitants of His native village were incapable of receiving accurate impressions of His vocation and work.

On His first appearance the people were amazed at His claim to be the Messiah, and angry because their refusal to accept it involved them in the comparison He drew between their attitude towards His message and the absence of faith in the time of the prophets. They were compelled to acknowledge, when He preached a second time, that in Him was a greatness beyond their comprehension; but prejudice is hard to remove. When men are forced to admit the manifestation of conspicuous merit, envy corrupts their judgment. If it be something alien to their being, and something of a higher order, as the Divine life in Jesus, it disturbs and vexes their passions and appetites. And, though men admit there is something better and profess to admire the achievement of success, they uneasily exhibit their natural disposition to detract from its value, and its attainment, by setting against it something lower in themselves. An honest effort might lift them into the sphere of appreciation, where they become partakers of a richer and greater conception of life; but the awakening in them of a recognition of superior heights of wisdom and goodness is overcome by a mean disposition. Petty family pride, its miserable self-conceit, in the people of Nazareth, stifled the growth of honourable regard for one more worthy.

Whatever Jesus may have done, or become, He was still in their eyes the Carpenter, and His natural relations living

in their midst confirmed their opinion.[1] His supernatural birth had not been revealed to them; they thought of Him and spoke of Him as they had known Him, and the esteem which He provoked in them they regarded as an offence, because they could not rise to the measure of it. They said, "What wisdom is this which is given unto Him, that even such mighty works are wrought by His hands?" But their prejudice and their own self-esteem closed their hearts against Him: "He could do no mighty work, save that He laid His hands on a few sick folk and healed them. And He marvelled because of their unbelief." [2]

Their attitude after this admission is surprising in its unreasonableness. It seems almost unaccountable, and were it not for similar illustrations of it in our own time we should be more than usually perplexed; but the perversity of the human mind exhibits continually this strange disposition, that men acknowledge the greatness of the Son of Man, and then refuse to act on what they believe. What is true of the Divine image before the soul is true of the Divine law in the organization of life. The world resists, and tries to ignore the application of God's laws to its industrial and civic life.

In the physical universe where God exhibits His wisdom and His goodness, men apply them for their material benefit as soon as they have been discovered; yet the same men refuse to make application of their knowledge of God in the realm of the spirit, and venture to question His wisdom and His goodness because they do not see similar progress in the moral sphere of daily life. Something is radically wrong in human nature, and a change is obviously necessary. A change of mind cannot be decisive without a corresponding movement of the heart; it would be only a temporary disturbance of the surface of human life; the depths must be reached to make it real and complete; and this result can only be accomplished when the issue is life or death. We can now see the wonderful mind of God in the unveiling of the personality of His Son

[1] St. Mark vi. 3. [2] St. Mark vi. 6.

before revealing His Divine origin. He came in human form that a real man should live a real life, and, through His gracious influences entering and working in mankind, form an unexpected foundation for His permanent abode. His vast design was being worked out unerringly and unceasingly, first to reveal and then to redeem, for men to grow into their need of a change in themselves, and then receive the power to make it. Thus, it behoved Christ to die for men to realize the tremendous meaning of regeneration, before application can be satisfactorily made in the life of man of the life Divine.

From Nazareth Jesus passed through the adjoining villages, preaching the great truths of the Kingdom of God, and at the end of this brief missionary tour He called His disciples together. Another stage had been reached in their training, and it was time for them to put into practice what they had learnt. Events were fast shaping themselves for the beginning of the end of the human life of Jesus. He saw in the gathering clouds of opposition to the higher life in Him the developments that would culminate in the great tragedy, that only through sacrifice there comes the uprising of new powers which are unconquerable. Rulers in Jerusalem had rejected Him, their representatives in Galilee resented His teaching, and although the people esteemed Him He knew how feeble was their faith. His work must now be extended to cover all the land, for all to know of His coming before He departed. His immediate followers, whom He had ordained to form the nucleus of His Society, He determined to send before Him to proclaim the approach of His Kingdom. Their mission was twofold: first to prepare for His final tour amongst the Children of Israel; and, second, to train them to carry on His work. They had been called from their ordinary occupations to be taught by Him, He had delivered to them the principles of His Kingdom, He had shown them how to pray in order to enter into the secret of His power, He had commenced to unfold the mysteries of the Kingdom in His parables, and they had seen His works. Now they were to go forth in His name,

with His authority, to preach that men should repent, for the Kingdom was at hand, and for their credentials they were to work miracles.

There is an indication, from the nature of their mission and the instructions given them, that Jesus intended to provide for an ordained ministry, and an efficient organization for universal service. The movements of the Apostles were restricted first to the Jews throughout Galilee. Their Master sent them before Him by two and two for mutual encouragement, with precise directions for their equipment and conduct. These instructions naturally referred primarily to the conditions of the land in which they lived, but they contained the principle of future work.

Jesus said, "Take neither gold nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes nor yet staves." There was no special intervention of Providence demanded for their maintenance. They were to depend entirely on the customs of their time, and the nature of their circumstances. A preacher who went about doing good would require none of these things. If he appeared with bare feet it would be a sign of humility and a sacred calling, the absence of any defensive weapons (such as staves [3]) would commend his mission, and no one would molest a man known to be on an errand of mercy. Afterwards, when they were to work farther a-field, every precaution was to be taken; [4] a minister of God cannot expect miracles to be wrought to indemnify him for loss of life or goods through negligence or carelessness of the use of the natural means employed by those who brave the perils of the road.

The Messenger's appearance with one coat signified the serious nature of his work. One coat is still a sign that a countryman is in pursuit of some occupation, and a workman is worthy of his meat. A second coat, worn between the outer and inner garments, invariably denotes his holiday attire or

[3] St. Matt. x. 10. The staff in common use as a weapon is the *nabooty*.
[4] St. Luke xxii. 35–39.

dress for a feast. The second coat bears a significance that is not in accord with the position of a man engaged in work; it is the sign of a position differing from the ordinary workman. It is worn by the heir, the man of high estate, and it is the festal garment.

The injunction to carry neither purse nor scrip was designed for their journey to be undertaken in the towns and villages where guest-chambers offered free hospitality and opportunities for intercourse with men.[5]

When the Messengers arrived at a town or village they were to seek the abode of the worthy, the most willing to hear their message, and there remain until their departure from the place. This implied that their sojourn must be short; one house in one town indicated haste, and if their message was resented their departure was to be quickened.

The next part of the charge to the Apostles recorded by St. Matthew referred to the future and formed the subject of subsequent conversations. References to divisions in families, conflicts with civil powers, and persecutions belong to a later date. St. Matthew doubtless collected the various directions given at different times into one discourse. Those contained in verses 16 to 39 in the tenth chapter of his Gospel were presumably spoken in Holy Week before his Lord's death. The charge was concluded in the two verses of the same chapter with the promise of a reward for worthy reception.

[5] St. Mark xii. 38.

CHAPTER XXII

A CRISIS IN THE WORK OF JESUS

WHILE the Apostles conducted their mission with the enthusiasm of new and zealous workers, the course of events in Galilee was rapidly approaching a crisis. John the Baptist remained in prison. There is no doubt that Herod was favourably disposed towards him, having heard John gladly; but the influence of the woman whom he had unrighteously married gained ascendancy, and her anger against the Baptist on account of his denunciation of their scandalous union made it difficult for the Tetrarch to protect him. Her vengeance grew more terrible the longer it was delayed; and at last a chance came to work her will on the captive.

The barbaric splendour of Oriental luxury in the days of the Herodian princes was exhibited in their magnificent banquets, and on the king's birthday he gave a generous feast to his courtiers. They revelled in the castle halls of Machærus; and John lay in the dungeon beneath. Flushed with wine in the sumptuous orgies, Herod's excitement at the appearance of Salome, the daughter of Herodias, in an Eastern dance, grew beyond the bounds of reason. A favour so great required an adequate response, and in a fit of generosity he offered her a rich reward of her own choosing, and, in the despot's way of expressing his desire to be liberal, vowed he would give even to the extent of half his kingdom. Straight to her waiting mother the princess went with her tidings, and the guilty woman, taking advantage of the result of her crafty design, told her daughter to ask for the head of John the Baptist. Her extraordinary demand touched even the base heart of the voluptuous prince. He had expected a request for jewels and rich apparel instead of the horrible appeal for a good man's life. The momentary impulse to refuse was checked by fear of the evil men around him, accustomed to the code

of honour of their time that held a reckless oath binding, and he reluctantly gave the order for the Baptist's execution.[1] The gruesome reward was brought on the dish which usually carried rich food to the royal table, and the dancing maiden bore her hideous trophy to her infamous mother.

John's disciples soon heard the dreadful news of their leader's death. They were allowed to remove his martyred body for burial, and in their sorrow they went and told Jesus. About the same time the Apostles returned from their mission with variable reports of the work they endeavoured to accomplish. Shocked by the awful calamity, and wearied with their journey, they were utterly overcome. With infinite tact and tenderness, Jesus called them apart for rest.

No place could be found in the city. The people, startled by the recital of the tragedy, excitedly discussed it in the profuse manner of Eastern men until the public mind was in a commotion. A despot's deed always impresses a populace with their need of a deliverer, and some of the followers of Jesus saw in their disordered state a suitable occasion to proclaim their leader King. He marked the crisis with His all-seeing eye, He knew their feelings, the hopes they entertained for the Man of Nazareth to emerge from His lowly sphere and consummate their wishes.

Herod's dark hour, occupied with bitter regret for his weakness, was the time for sowing the seed of suspicion. He knew what sort of sensation his shameless act would make on his people, and servile adherents, anxious to court his favour, were ready to seek their own gain at the expense of others by reporting any design against his throne. Associated in their minds with John the Baptist was the enterprise of Jesus; its activities were assuming larger dimensions, and the knowledge of its growth might well have made Herod uneasy about the movement. His sore and aching conscience would not let him rest. Humbled by his crime, his guilty soul awoke in superstitious dread, and when conflicting messages reached him

[1] Josephus, *Ant.* Book XVIII. chap. v. 2.

about the work of Jesus, he believed that John the Baptist had risen again. He enquired for Him in order to ascertain the truth and calm his fear.

Capernaum was not a suitable place for the Apostles at a time when the vague apprehension in the minds of the people might at any moment assume a definite shape and direction, so Jesus called them to go with Him across the lake. They stepped into a boat and steered for the north-eastern shore beyond the little plain where the upper Jordan enters the sea. And on the slopes of the hills, amidst the grass and flowers, they sought a retreat from the stress of the situation of the day. But they were not allowed to escape so easily; their departure had been noticed, and a great multitude followed them on foot round the northern side of the water. From the higher ground above the little plain Jesus saw them bringing in their midst their suffering friends. On the other side of Him sheep would be peacefully cropping the fresh green grass under the watchful eyes of their keepers, and His great heart filled with pity for the weary people coming towards Him as sheep without a shepherd. They were looking for the Messiah, and, if they did not exactly believe, they had a large idea that Jesus might be the long-expected King, and they were in sore distress. Their notions were more or less confused, and even comfort was forgotten in their enthusiasm for Jesus and confidence in His work.

He healed their sick, and, as He taught the people, He looked with a great compassion on the hungry multitude, and, turning to Philip, said, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" He said this to test him, for "He knew what He would do." There was something like embarrassment in Philip's answer to the question; their limited resources were unequal to the demand for feeding so vast a number, and he suggested that even two hundred pennyworth of bread would barely supply the people's need. Meanwhile, a shepherd lad [2]

[2] The idea that the lad was a pedlar selling cakes is an impossible one. The amount of food a boy could carry would soon have been purchased

had come to see the sight, and, hearing the discussion, promptly offered his daily faring of five loaves and two small fishes.

Simon Peter's brother, Andrew, brought him to Jesus, Who took the loaves and fishes, apparently so utterly inadequate for His purpose, and commanded His disciples to arrange the people in companies on the grass.

The great throng presented a beautiful picture with their gaily coloured garments framed by nature's tinted carpet on which they sat. Expectant faces turned towards the little group in the centre preparing for their need, as another marvellous scene was about to be enacted before them.

Never since the days of Moses had there been such a display of Divine bounty. In that far-off time manna had silently appeared by an invisible hand from heaven to feed the hungry. Now the multitude can see with their own eyes the manual acts which give the increase. Hushed by the strange and solemn sight, they watched and waited. Jesus took the bread, blessed it, brake it, and handed it to the disciples for distribution. His bounty multiplied as it passed from Him until all were fed. Even then pieces were left of no apparent use; but Jesus saw them, and said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost"; and there was enough to fill twelve baskets.[3]

This miracle of the feeding of five thousand men recorded by all the four Evangelists has a significant bearing on the purpose of Christ. John the Baptist's death had caused Him to reflect with redoubled force on the events through which He must pass. The cross, with its pain and shame, became more clear, and He was ready to give His life; but that the disciples were not prepared to understand His sacrifice was evident in their mistaken idea of His Kingdom. They could not see what He meant to be to them, and they were slow

by a multitude of five thousand. The few cakes (Eastern loaves) and two fishes represented a shepherd's food, and shepherds would be on the hills with their sheep. Our Lord's reference to sheep naturally arose from comparison.

[3] *κόφινος* — baskets used by the Jews for carrying their food.

to learn. Their hope for Him was a throne, and an earthly crown; they little thought the throne would be a cross, and on His brow would rest a crown of thorns. As they looked in one direction, His gaze turned to another.

It would not have been difficult for the people to obtain food; towns were near, their homes were not very far away, and shops lay between them and their destination. When Jesus decided to feed them His disciples were surprised. It was not His custom to provide for natural needs when there were means for their supply. But he had to deal with the crisis that had arisen in the minds of the people by the convergence of many dissimilar views; His Kingdom was being revealed, yet His disciples failed to realize its character and purpose, although they had been set apart for carrying it into execution. Prevailing hopes in common with the expectations of the Jews were held as it were in solution, and the desire to precipitate them into events according to their wishes was feebly held in check. The people wished to take their Master by force and make Him King. Disappointed with His refusal, the Twelve reluctantly but obediently followed His directions to cross the sea and leave Him to deal with the situation. He was in a better position on the eastern shore in the Tetrarchy of Philip than the populous towns under the jurisdiction of Herod, and the Apostles were safer in a boat on the sea away from the people. The nature of the crisis was such that it required very delicate treatment. It was not only necessary to extricate His followers from the difficulty created by their desire to make Him King; Jesus had to turn their attention more directly to the truth about Himself, to raise their thoughts to a higher level than earthly prospects, and remove from their minds all political considerations. He knew He could retain the favour of the people by declaring Himself their King, and, if He rejected the part they had assigned to Him, the popularity which protected Him against the designs of the rulers would be destroyed, and the followers who had supported Him estranged. But there was no hesitation

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid

Mark VI: 50

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him

Matthew XVII: 3

in His manner, and no lack of courage. He left the people not because He was afraid, but in order to prevent an extension of the movement, and provide for a new direction. Those who looked for the disciples to join them in their futile attempt to acclaim a King, watched them depart; they saw Him disappear, yet they lingered in the place, waiting for His return.

As evening fell and the dusk deepened, the tenseness of the strain of the circumstances communicated itself to Jesus, and He turned in prayer to God. Hour after hour passed in secret communion, oblivious of the gathering clouds and rolling billows on the lake. As the early morning light awakened sleeping nature round Him, He rose from His knees, and, looking over the seething water in the hazy atmosphere of the dawn, He saw His disciples toiling in, rowing with wind and wave against them. Through the long hours of darkness they had striven, brooding over their frustrated hopes and the bitterness of failure. After all their toil they were only a little more than half-way [4] across when Jesus saw them. Immediately, as if in their thoughts was a cry of need, He went towards them, walking on the sea, and seemed as if He would have passed their boat.

When they saw Him they thought it was a ghost, an apparition, and cried out for fear. He came in the fourth watch of the night, just as the dawn had begun to break, and in the imperfect light enveloped in the driving mists of the storm His form seemed unnatural to the agitated disciples. Their first view of Him was distorted by their unstrung minds. He had to speak before He was recognized. Nearer and nearer He came and interpreted Himself with the reassuring message, "It is I; be not afraid." Peter instantly replied, "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water." There arose in his mind an irresistible impulse to enter into the fellowship of Christ, and to rise up into His life, and with it a feeling of power was born to carry out his purpose. He went down from the boat and walked some distance on the water,

[4] St. John vi. 19.

but, seeing the boisterous waves, he was afraid and began to sink. As soon as he became aware of his natural position and of his natural power, he sank back into his own natural self. His faith had failed. He looked around him and away from Jesus. Having momentarily lost the realization of Christ's presence, he began to sink. His call for help restored the vivid sense of Christ's power, his hand grasped the hand of Jesus, and he was raised to His side. It was not the direction of his faith that went astray, but its weakness. Jesus said unto him, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" He was grieved that the disciple had failed.

The wind ceased and Jesus was received into the boat. Amazed beyond measure, the disciples wondered, because they considered not the miracle of the loaves. It should have prepared them for a further demonstration of the power of their Lord; but their minds had been bent on the popular movement to make Him King, and, disappointed because He had not consented, they were bewildered. When He multiplied bread for thousands He desired to fix their attention on Himself as the One appointed to be the spiritual sustenance of the human race; and, as it foreshadowed His death, His body broken, His walking on the sea was the sign of His resurrection power, the power that gives encouragement to the drooping spirit, the strength and stay for the frail vessel of human nature in its peril on the sea of life, and courage for greater effort for battling with the waves of trouble by which it might be overwhelmed.

With Jesus in the boat the disciples soon reached the Land of Gennesareth, the plain on the south-west of Capernaum. Meanwhile, the people who had remained on the eastern side of the sea in the vain hope of His reappearance, were brought home by some fishing-boats belonging to Tiberias,[5] driven by the gale in the night to the place of shelter by the shore under the hills on which the people had been miraculously fed.

More significant lessons were necessary both for the disciples

[5] St. John vi. 22.

and the people, to disperse their thoughts of an earthly Kingdom. The Passover was nigh, and many people were already preparing for their journey to Jerusalem to keep the feast. An opportunity was found in the significance of the time. Events had occurred which impressed the mind of Jesus with the necessity for turning the thoughts of His disciples and the people into a more spiritual channel. They had brought nearer to Him the end He had in view for Himself. With this before Him, and the carnal nature of the minds of the vast number of His followers, even at the Passover season, He was constrained to act for the future, and make a more determined effort to identify Himself with the eternal purpose of God the Father. Each Evangelist has described in the same words His treatment of the bread for the people. They say, "He blessed and brake and gave to the disciples." This is precisely what He did at the Passover, when He instituted the Lord's Supper. We cannot dismiss His expressive sign without considering the circumstances in which He acted, and its relation to the discourse in the synagogue on the Bread of Life which followed, when He interpreted the miracles that had just been performed, the breaking of the bread and the walking on the sea, in the mystical language of His death and resurrection.

As He proceeded to the synagogue His presence became known, and the astonished people who had crossed the water said, "Rabbi, whence comest Thou hither?" Their remark might have been intended to please Him, but He told them frankly He was not deceived by their attention; He knew why they sought Him; He said, "Ye seek Me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled."

Turning from reproof to exhortation, He commenced to preach the next great sermon of His life on earth. The Sermon on the Mount translated into language His perfect life; the discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum transferred His life to man. His language was not so strange to the people whom He addressed as it seems to us. Sacred instruction was

called *bread;* [6] to believe was to receive, and to receive was to absorb, and thus to eat. The people were familiar with the use of these symbolical expressions; there was a mysterious harmony, which thoughtful men could feel and understand, in the connection of the outward form with the inward meaning. Between the natural and the spiritual it is established by faith, that movement of man's being, impelled by his will, to accept and believe the words of Jesus, fresh and luminous with eternal truth. What the mortal eye sees on one side the immortal vision recognizes on the other. Earthly bread, which nourishes the body by a process that can only be observed by experience, is a symbol of the heavenly food which sustains the higher life, of which a man is conscious by another experience, apprehended by the spirit in union with the life of Jesus. Effort is required, of thought, and desire, and will, to rise from the consideration of things natural to apply their spiritual content to the life of man.

Words more sublime were never uttered than the words of Jesus in the synagogue of Capernaum, but, so gross and materialized were the multitude, they mistook their meaning. When He said, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give you; for Him hath God the Father sealed," they asked Him, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" He answered, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent." And they inquired what sign Jesus would give them that they might believe on Him. Moses had given them bread from heaven; He had offered them only the loaves of earth. Their idea of inward bread was outward bread coming down from heaven. Jesus told them it was not the descent from heaven, but the nature of the descending object, that made the difference. The bread which Moses gave, like other gifts, came from God, but they were not all equally durable; some were for time, others for eternity. Manna fed the fathers of Israel in the days of

[6] Jer. xv. 16; Prov. ix. 5.

old; it kept them alive for a time in the desert; but they died. The Bread of God, He said, is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world. "I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst. . . . And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

The difference in kind and not its source, astonished and disappointed them. It conferred no material benefits, and they murmured as their forefathers had done in the wilderness. He might have given them a full disclosure of His Divine nature and sternly demanded their allegiance; but He knew that men with their limitations, their narrow view of life, their ignorance and folly, and their indifference towards a complete change of mind, could not be forced to believe. No spiritual end could be achieved against their will. In figures yet more startling and more emphatic, He said: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whosoever eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."

To eat His flesh and to drink His blood meant to become changed into Him, so that He Himself lived in them, for His life to be their life; but the disappointment to the carnal mind in the people who followed Jesus for earthly gain rendered them incapable of apprehending the significance of the life He came to bestow. They were offended because something else was offered instead of what they expected. An uneasy feeling had often disturbed their comfortable visions of the future, but they protected themselves against the new and larger truth, the abundant life conveyed in the teaching of Jesus, by holding fast the hope that all would be well for the chosen people of

God. He knew that many of them would fail to stand the test. He said, "Doth this offend you?" Then, apparently speaking to those nearest to Him, He appealed to an event which they would see as bound up with what He had said, His ascension into heaven. It was not so much in the form of a question, as the Authorized Version gives the words, but a parenthetical statement.

His sermon was frequently interrupted; then, slowly but surely, one by one, the congregation melted away. Some of them were His old followers, who "walked no more with Him." He turned to His Apostles and said, "Will ye also go away?" Mingled with their vanishing hopes of a Messianic reign was a warm personal affection for their Master, and Peter, ever ready to respond, answered falteringly, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." If Peter hesitated, what must have been the state of his companions? Jesus saw there were differences in their minds, and a wavering spirit in their hearts, and said: "Have I not chosen you Twelve, and one of you is a devil?" One of them, altogether dissatisfied with the turn of events, remained with them, but he had made up his mind to follow a way of his own.

The first decisive step had been taken to sever the tie that bound Him to earth; the first clear vision appeared of the unreadiness of the world, even of His Apostles, to receive the Kingdom. They could not see the life He saw, the glory of the life eternal. There was no shrinking in Him from the sacrifice demanded for its great revelation, but there was sorrow that men had failed to behold the Kingdom His life established.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE OPPOSITION OF THE RULERS

Although the Evangelist St. John, in his record of the feeding of the five thousand men, refers to the approach of the Passover, nothing is said about our Lord's movements. We may therefore assume that He was absent from the Great Feast. Such neglect of the national obligation can only be accounted for by the hostility of the rulers in Jerusalem. His time had not yet come for the last conflict, His work was not yet finished. He decided to abandon the service imposed on every devout Jew in order that He might accomplish the purpose in His mind. This would not affect His disciples in the same way, and in all probability He sent them to the Holy City to observe the memorial of the redemption of Israel. There is some reason for this assumption, for immediately after the Passover we find a number of rulers from Jerusalem appearing before our Lord in Capernaum with a complaint that His disciples had neglected the customary ablutions of their ritual observances. Attention had been directed towards them by their indifference to the various ordinances of the Jews. As the disciples of Jesus they would naturally be watched, and every little change from the usual routine noticed.

Immediately after their return to Galilee emissaries of the rulers followed them from Jerusalem, indignant at their treatment of cherished rules, and probably disappointed and angry because Jesus had not been with His disciples to enable them to prosecute Him. An opportunity was seized by the rulers to make their complaints when they saw the disciples eating with unwashed hands.

St. Mark adds a few notes [1] on the customs of the Pharisees

[1] St. Mark vii. 3, 4.

relating to the traditions of the elders about washing. These customs seem to us most unreasonable and absurd, and what is still more surprising is the captious criticisms of the Pharisees. Why they should take the trouble to find fault with so small a matter as the neglect of washing of hands before meat is not easy to understand without a knowledge of the significance of the act. Their feelings can be better understood by comparison with those of the Moslem regarding his washing before prayer. He believes that if he does not follow correctly the ceremonial ablutions his prayer will be of no avail.[2]

It is this attachment to outward observance, and the absolute neglect of the necessary inward cleansing, which Jesus forcibly denounced. "Full well," He said, "ye reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your own traditions."[3] A still more terrible indictment He brought against them for their neglect to keep the fifth commandment by a mean subterfuge of their own designing. "Moses said, Honour thy father and mother: and whoso curseth his father and mother, let him die the death:[4] but ye say, if a man shall say to his father and mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father and mother, making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such things do ye."[5]

Corban,[6] meaning originally an oblation to God, was used as a mere word of vowing without any intention of actually offering the gift. If a son said to his parents, when they were in need of his support, that the money and property which he might use for their sustenance is "Corban," he es-

[2] I once saw a Moslem soldier make his preparations, and, just as he was ready to pray, his mother, whom he had not seen for a long time, approached him. Before shaking her hand he covered his own with his tunic, lest he should touch a woman, even his mother, and he should be defiled.

[3] St. Mark vii. 9. [4] Lev. xx. 9.

[5] St. Mark vii. 10–13. [6] Josephus, *Ant*, Book IV. chap. iv. 4.

caped from his filial responsibility, and his evasion became more odious through its being effected in the name of God.

Turning to the people round Him, He said, "Hearken unto Me, every one of you, and understand. There is nothing from without a man that, entering into him, can defile him; but the things which come out of him, these are they that defile a man." [7] Altogether baffled, the Pharisees departed, and Jesus entered into a house. His disciples, following, asked if He had noticed that the Pharisees were offended at His saying, as if they were anxious that the malicious feelings of these unscrupulous men should not be overtaxed lest they might resort to more violent persecution. In His reply Jesus showed He had no fear of them. "Let them alone," He said; "they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." [8]

Accustomed to the familiarity of daily intercourse the disciples asked Him the meaning of His parable about defilement, and He proceeded to explain in detail the difference between that which enters into a man and the terrible evil generated in the heart which cometh out in act and deed.

Offences on the Sabbath Day

It was quite evident to the Scribes and Pharisees that Jesus was a dangerous Reformer Who should be carefully watched lest the people became altogether disaffected by His influence. Whether He was in the city or out of it, the vigilant eyes of those who were ill-disposed towards His teaching followed Him. He could not walk through the corn-fields near the town unobserved; the actions of His disciples were also noticed, for they were now under His guidance.

Soon after the Passover, before the barley harvest had commenced, as they passed through the standing corn on a Sabbath Day,[9] being hungry, they plucked the ripening ears,

[7] St. Mark vii. 14, 15. [8] St. Matt. xv. 14.

[9] St. Luke vi. 1. This Sabbath, *εν σαββάτω δευτεροπρώτῳ, i.e.* the first of the second Sabbath, is called by St. Luke by the peculiar name of the "second first sabbath," which has perplexed all scholars. It cannot be in-

rubbed them in their hands, and ate the grain, and thus another opportunity was found for complaint.[10] Their offence was not in the theft of corn — the law expressly sanctioned their action;[11] it was the manual labour involved that violated the Pharisaical interpretation of the Mosaic law. Human invention had substituted the letter for the spirit, because the Pharisees believed that the Power which had inspired their forefathers had been withdrawn, and their actions certainly confirmed their belief; the inner meaning of their religion was dead. For the guidance of the people in the absence of this inspiring Power, the rulers had elaborated a system of rules and regulations from the original law, and produced a catalogue of negations which they were convinced had similar force, and must be accepted with the same obligation that the law of God demanded. This new factor, the opinion of Jewish Rabbis, was their remedy for the defect in the national life caused by the loss of the inspiration which had instructed their ancestors; it established the rules for which custom secured the same respect as the original commandment.

Differences of Rabbinical opinion, instead of lessening the force of the rules, increased their number, and the people were expected to keep all of them since every one was a part of thir system.

Every provision of the Mosaic law had by custom been degraded through the introduction of these frivolous and senseless restrictions and the serious penalties imposed for transgression.

The words of the fourth commandment, "In it thou shalt not do any work,"[12] were extended, and then defined by a

tended to denote the time of the year, as the corn was nearly ripe. Dean Farrar says in a footnote, vol. i. page 435 of his *Life of Christ*, the only opinions which seem sufficiently probable and sufficiently supported to make it worth while to mention them are (1) "The first Sabbath of the second month" (Wetstein); (2) The first Sabbath in the second year of the Sabbatical Cycle (Wieseler); (3) The first Sabbath after the second day of unleavened bread (Scaleger, Ewald, Keim, etc.).

[10] St. Luke vi. 2, 3. [11] Deut. xxiii. 25.

[12] Exod. xx. 10.

schedule of "forty works save one," [13] which were forbidden; though all of them no man could remember, yet if one was inadvertently infringed the offender was liable to be punished. One of these was reaping, and this included plucking an ear of corn; threshing was another, and rubbing the corn between the palms of the hands was threshing. The disciples had thus broken two of their commandments.

The Jews were proud of these Sabbatical laws, and their anxiety to maintain their obligation was more from the desire of setting a barrier between themselves and other nations, and exalting their self-esteem, than their recognition of a Divine institution. By thus excluding themselves a means was found for defending their nationality from the dangerous influence of their Gentile neighbours. This isolation amounted to a confession of an inherent weakness which might naturally be expected from the use of external means for preserving their national existence, instead of possessing a sense of the presence of God in the details of life, that vital union with Him which the history of their nation should have inspired.

Jesus came with the Divine Spirit to the nation, to make known the presence of the Power which had originally given them the Commandments; to restore their intrinsic value by casting aside all that had become burdensome from Rabbinical legislation, and by issuing new commandments as authoritative as those of the Mosaic law. In these He exhibited the true spirit of the old order in its complete form, which He termed fulfilling the law. "The Sabbath," He said, "was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." [14] His view of the law was Divine, and He unfolded its principle as God's care for man. The Sabbath was intended to secure for him a rest from the incessant toil, to protect him from an over-measure of labour exacted by selfish people affected with the desire for their own interest, to provide him with an opportunity for the

[13] It was forbidden to catch a flea, because this was a kind of hunting — one of the 39 precepts (Jennings, *Jewish Antiquities*, page 442).

[14] St. Mark ii. 27.

enjoyment of uninterrupted communion with the Eternal Father, and prepare him for his final home. It was God's gift, a sign of His good-will towards man, a symbol of His providential care. Rest for the soul was as necessary as rest for the body, and the tranquil repose of the spirit is found only in God; it is His peace for the weary heart. The deepest weariness is in self, and self having been actively employed needs rest — rest in God away from self. It was this rest that was specially needed for which man was called from earthly toil to that state of communion which enables him to appreciate the benefit of the Sabbath on earth, and realize how much more will be the enjoyment of the heavenly Sabbath where everything is Divine, where every one with whom he holds converse loves and serves his Lord, where there is no exposure to temptation, and where nothing that defileth can enter in.

Conscious of the Divine will, Jesus could give freedom of conduct for man to grow into a fuller knowledge of this life in God. He respected the law of the Sabbath when it could be shown to minister to the welfare of man; when it interfered with it, as in the case the Pharisees brought before Him, He set it aside, and declared that the Son of Man was Lord also of the Sabbath. He claimed to decide also, as the representative man, what was best for him, without any direction from the customs of men for His guidance. As the Lord of the Sabbath He was the Son of God, and showed the will of the Father towards mankind. He gave an illustration from Scripture which His adversaries were bound to accept, what David did [15] when he was hungry, to justify the action of His disciples by an established precedent that there were occasions when the law may be discarded, and a similar need had arisen in the hunger of His disciples. "If," He said, "ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless."

On another Sabbath Day,[16] when Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, He saw a man with a withered hand, according

[15] St. Mark ii. 25; 1 Sam. xxi. 6. [16] St. Luke vi. 6.

to tradition [17] a stonemason unable to earn his living and compelled to beg, who appealed to Jesus for its restoration. The reason for his appearing was known to the Pharisees sitting in their seats of honour, their watchful eyes fixed more on the man than their ears on hearing the sublime teaching of the Master. They expected a miracle of Divine compassion, and their hearts were stirred with jealous wrath. Jesus perceived their thoughts, and said to the man, "Rise up and stand forth in the midst"; then, looking on His enemies, He skilfully put the question,[18] "Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?" There could be only one answer, but they were intent on finding fault, looking for a charge against Him. He would not let them escape in silent anger, and pressed His advantage with another question, "What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much more then is a man better than a sheep?" According to their better judgment His argument was unanswerable. "And looking round upon them all, He said to the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so, and his hand was restored whole as the other." [19] The word of Jesus was enough to heal.

Nothing could be said; the spoken word was not a breach of Sabbath observance. Something, therefore, must be done by the hostile critics of Jesus. They had been put to shame and confusion, and were determined in their rage to resort to any method for His destruction. Their animosity towards the Herodians, a northern sect of renegade Jews subservient to the Tetrarch, Herod Antipas, was cast aside to make common cause against the Teacher Who seemed beyond their own power alone to destroy.

[17] This tradition was preserved in the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, quoted by Jerome on St. Matt. xii. 13. [18] St. Luke vi. 9.

[19] St. Luke vi. 10. St. Luke alone tells us (chap. vi. 6) that it was the right hand. Medical men regard this as "just such a fact as a medical writer could not fail to remark" (Dr. Belcher, *Our Lord's Miracles of Healing*, p. 123).

CHAPTER XXIV

A MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE

THE development of the opposition of the Scribes and Pharisees alarmed the Apostles. Constant friction caused them to fear more serious persecution, and their anxiety retarded the progress of their training. Signs of impending trouble made it necessary to leave Capernaum for a time, and seek a retreat from the manifold distractions of daily intercourse with contending parties.

Jesus moved towards the north with the Twelve through the beautifully wooded region of Upper Galilee, into the more secluded districts of the northern province; but even there they were not altogether free from observation. News of their movements was circulated, and when Jesus reached the borders of Phœnicia the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon discussed the wonders of His works. Some of the people had seen Him in His own country, and were interested in Him, and He must have had a regard for them, although they were Gentiles, for they were human, and He was concerned with all that was human. It was His deep feeling and strong passion for the salvation of the world, and the Apostles' share in it, that led Him into the aliens' land for a brief period of foreign service. Phœnicia was a foreign land to the Jews, and when one of the people, a woman of Canaan, a heathen and an aboriginal inhabitant of the country, followed Jesus and His disciples, the racial and religious feelings of His companions would be roused by their encounter with a member of the despised nation. No distinction of race has ever been so sharp as that between a Jew and a Canaanite; the prejudices and antagonisms of centuries divided them. On the side of the Jew the pride of race established a sense of superiority which can only be estimated

by compassion with the feelings of the white man for his black brother in the Southern States of America. In the Canaanite a servile fear had been bred by long ages of oppression until humiliation had reached its lowest level. It may to a certain extent be gauged by the contentment of their descendants,[1] the Fellaheen of Southern Palestine, to remain in the abject position the nature of their state has accorded them. A Fellah is never perturbed by the contemptuous remarks of his superiors; if he be found guilty of neglect to perform some office, or do some work, he excuses himself by saying, "I am only a poor Fellah," and expects his fault to be overlooked. Such a person followed Jesus with a piteous appeal for the healing of her daughter. His manner of dealing with her at first appears as if He accommodated His mind to the disposition of the Jew; His disciples urged Him to send her away, because her presence and importunity annoyed them; but He listened to her request and at first made no reply. For the purpose of testing her faith and establishing in her a better appreciation of her position as a suitable object for sympathy and assistance, and at the same time teaching His disciples, His generous impulse was held in check. In response to her continuous and tender pleading He informed her that He was "not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[2] Still she persisted, and when He said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs," there was the first sign of encouragement.[3] Dogs are the outcasts of the East; the use of such a term in addressing a man or a woman is the expression of supreme contempt, and she knew it was only what might be expected from a Jew to a Canaanite. No one feeds the dogs; they are the unclean scavengers of the streets, and are left to look after themselves. She would not have resented the appli-

[1] The Fellaheen are descended from the mixed marriages of the ancient Israelites with the aboriginal inhabitants of the country, and, as their name implies, are the tillers of the soil. Fellah is derived from *fallah*, to dig, and the plural Fellaheen simply means the cultivators of the land. They were the poor, that were always associated with servitude.

[2] St. Matt. xv. 24. [3] *κυναρίοις* = little dogs, puppies. St. Matt. xv. 26.

cation. But the expression "little dogs," although this description shares in the larger distinction, bears a different meaning, and the diminutive is the word in the original text. Little dogs enter the houses, play with the children, and share the children's food. We may now see the marvellous combination of skill and kindness exercised by Jesus in dealing with a difficult case when the contending forces of Canaanitish servility and Jewish arrogance appeared before Him in the nature of the woman and of His disciples. Eagerly noticing the difference, the woman saw a gleam of light shining through the darkness of our Lord's refusal; she took Him at His word and said, "True, Lord," it would not be right to take the children's bread, that is, the whole loaf, and cast it to the little dogs, to us who are aliens; but the little dogs receive the crumbs "which fall from their master's table." On His own definition of the dependence of the little dog on the family she pleaded. He had given the opening through which she might pass into His power to aid. She entered and gained all she asked. The greatness of her faith was acknowledged, and her daughter healed.

Another lesson appeared in the miracle for the Apostles. Their national prejudices could not be cast aside suddenly and without training, but they had to be removed for their future work; so their Master took His disciples step by step into His confidence, and gave them a further proof of His universal love. At Jacob's well they marvelled that He even talked with a woman of Samaria, and then saw the result of His conversation. When the Roman centurion exhibited a greater faith than He had seen in Israel, Jesus pointed out to His disciples the universal application of His Gospel. They were able to see in the Syro-Phœnician woman the growth of a heathen's faith in spite of all discouragement and under the most adverse circumstances. Their own feelings would prove to them the need of response to such a faith, and their opinion of the Master's benevolent deed furnished them with a guide for their treatment of the heathen.

A door had now been opened for foreign service, and Jesus with the Twelve went through Phœnicia from Tyre to Sidon. Turning from the coast, they crossed the country to the south of Hermon, and gradually retraced their steps to the Sea of Galilee. From thence they travelled down the eastern side of the lake through Gergesa and Gamala to the cities of the Decapolis. Gadara was the most important town in the Greek confederation, and Gadara's domain extended beyond the southern extremity of the Galilean Sea, adjoining that of Hippos on the east and Scythopolis [4] on the west. This region formed the Decapolis proper, and included both banks of the Hieromax, the great valley through which flows the principal tributary of the Jordan, a larger stream than the more important river before their confluence. In the narrow part of the valley it rushes over miniature rapids, then expands into wide gleaming pools over which the dark-green oleander sheds its crimson blossoms. Lofty palm-trees rising above the basin of the valley make the picturesque river a scene of Oriental beauty. Farther up the gorge on one side are the beetling crags which reach the plateau on the edge of the lake; on the other there is a small plain where seventeen different kinds of tropical plants have been counted in a wilderness of verdure. Hundreds of palm-trees in this delectable spot rear their giant heads; streams of hot water flow beneath the rank vegetation, and fall in bright cascades through a myriad fronds of maidenhair fern to the river. Lower down the stream, nearer the road to Tiberias, remains of baths and a theatre indicate the use the Gadarenes made of this region. Other cities of the Decapolis were situated in various parts east of the Jordan, some of them on the south of Gadara in Perea. Ancient geographers differ to a certain extent in regard to their names; we are also left in doubt about the nature of their mutual connection. They formed little groups and were scattered throughout an extensive area, as far from each other as Damascus, Kanatha (Kunnawat in Jebel Druze, the Hill of

[4] Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Book III, chap. ix. 7.

Bashan) and Philadelphia (Amman); we therefore naturally conclude that the part of the Decapolis mentioned by St. Mark is the country lying immediately south and east of the Sea of Galilee. Incidentally we may observe that a knowledge of Greek was essential for the work that Jesus undertook, and it is not unreasonable to assume that there is sufficient evidence of His knowledge of the language in the record of His journey.

Into these haunts of pleasure, where idolatrous practices also abounded, Jesus passed with His message, His good news of the Kingdom of God, not by denouncing the way of life of the inhabitants, as many people today censure the acts they do not commit themselves, but by the manifestation of a better way, a new and holier life. We miss a reference to the Gadarene whom He had saved from a terrible affliction, but something better is found in the important testimony that a large crowd followed Jesus on His return from the south by the eastern side of the lake. Embarrassed by their attention yet full of compassion, His efforts were unceasing in His desire to help and to heal. Few are recorded, one here and there as it appeared more significant than the rest.

Special notice is given of a deaf stammerer brought by his friends to Jesus. Taking him on one side, He thrust His fingers into his ears, moistened his stammering tongue with saliva, not to confirm the crude notions of the people in the efficacy of its use, but to kindle faith by these symbols in the poor creature before Him, apparently unable to do anything for himself. His miserable condition is suggested by his having been brought by friends. It appealed to Jesus, and the little details introduced into the process of healing were all to gain the poor man's confidence. With an upward look to heaven, and a sigh for earthly sorrow, He said to him, "Be opened," and the man's ears were unstopped and his stammering tongue was unloosed.[5]

The miracles in the desert on the eastern side of the sea drew more and more people to Jesus. Some had followed Him from

[5] St. Mark vii. 35.

a considerable distance, and though He wished to be alone with His disciples, His compassion for the multitude and their need were again displayed in supplying them with food. He could not send them away. Accustomed to long periods of abstinence,[6] they had forgotten their need of bodily sustenance in their attention to His works. He knew that when the strain was relaxed, and they were left to seek food for themselves, they would faint on the road. And the thought of suffering people found a quick response in the heart of Jesus. His disciples had not yet reached that state of feeling for a promiscuous crowd, and most of them were heathens[7] who had followed their Master on His missionary journey. His reference to their need met with little sympathy from the Twelve, who acknowledged with a plaintive remark the impossibility of their being able to find sufficient food for so many people. Jesus asked them how many loaves they had, and when they answered, "Seven, and a few little fishes," He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground, and He took the small provision, gave thanks, brake the bread, and gave it to His disciples for distribution amongst the people. All ate and were filled, "and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full."

Of the number fed there were four thousand men, besides women and children. Jesus sent the multitude away, and with His disciples crossed the sea in a ship, and according to St. Mark came into the parts of Dalmanutha,[8] and St. Matthew the coasts of Magadan.[9] They evidently refer to the same district, and most probably on the south of the lake in the Decapolitan domain of Scythopolis. Early Palestine explorers found considerable ruins bearing the name of Madshideh in this district, a name which seems to resemble Magadan. On

[6] St. Mark viii. 1, etc.

[7] In the feeding of the 4,000 the word for basket, *σφυρις*, is a Gentile term, showing that the multitude fed were mostly Gentiles.

[8] St. Mark viii. 10.

[9] St. Matt. xv. 39. Magadan, and not Magdala, has been proved to be the true reading.

the eastern bank of the Jordan, in the same neighbourhood, lies the village of Delhemiyeh. No other probable sites have been discovered. These places afforded a refuge for a time from the enemies of Jesus, but even there they sought for Him and renewed their importunities for a sign [10] from heaven. He was more sorrowful than angry at their persistence. Their demands had been answered before, and it seemed as if nothing would subdue their querulous spirit and enlighten their understanding. The co-operation of the members of the two rival sects of Pharisees and Sadducees in their attack on Jesus signified the increasing strength of their antagonism, and not a willingness to learn. He met their demand with an absolute and scornful refusal. He said, "Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you, There shall be no sign given to this generation."

His attempt to find another retreat for His disciples to continue their instruction was frustrated. They had left the eastern plateau because there was no place of rest in the cities or the desert region round them. Now only one way of escape was left from the multitudes that sought Jesus for what they could gain, and from His adversaries who longed for His defeat. Again He departed with His disciples to the other side, but to the northern shore, from whence they might pass into the upper reaches of the river above the lake. On their way, while the last encounter was fresh in His mind, Jesus warned the Twelve against the corruptible influence of the Pharisees and the worldly aspirations of the Sadducees. Immediately the disciples thought of their forgetfulness to provide food.[11] In their haste to cross the sea they had no idea of their need of bread until they were settled in the boat, when they discovered only one loaf on board. They took the warning of their Lord to mean they were to be careful how they renewed their stock of provisions. Their dull minds had regard for things seen and temporal, the unseen and eternal they could not so easily apprehend. Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, and

[10] St. Matt. xvi. 1–4. [11] St. Mark viii. 14; St. Matt. xvi. 6–12.

the little profit in them from His teaching, mildly rebuked their lack of understanding, reminding them of what they had seen and heard and should have known. "How is it," said He, "that ye do not understand?"—that His reference to leaven had nothing to do with loaves, nor any outward form, but the spirit working within.

The short voyage was soon over; they moored their boat near where the Jordan enters the lake, and went to Bethsaida Julias, to purchase food for continuing their journey. Jesus and His Apostles were so well known that, in spite of their efforts to evade observation and proceed on their way, they were again delayed. On passing through the town His attention was arrested by the friends of a blind man.[12] In order that His progress might not be interrupted, He took the blind man with Him beyond the dwellings of the people, and there began to restore his sight. Following the customary methods of the physicians of the day, He spat on the man's eyes and then touched them to give him confidence. The man had shown no desire of his own for healing, and his faith had to be kindled, hence the progressive character of the miracle. At first he could see but dimly, men as trees walking. Again Jesus put His hand on the man's eyes; his sight was restored, and he saw quite clearly. He was evidently a countryman, and this accounted for Jesus taking him out of the town, an additional reason being to avoid further publicity and to continue His journey northwards. He therefore sent the man home and told Him not to go into the town.

[12] St. Mark viii. 22–26.

CHAPTER XXV

THE GREAT CONFESSION

After healing the blind man on the outskirts of Bethsaida Julias, Jesus and His disciples pursued the course of their journey towards Cæsarea Philippi [1] on the northern border of their country. They passed (Lake Hûleh) the Waters of Merom, the first of the Jordan lakes, with its marshy tracts and beds of rushes, and entered the picturesque neighbourhood of the old city of Dan. Through the woods and meadows the disciples walked in the enjoyment of the company of their Master and the glory of the brilliant summer sun shining through the trees and sparkling on the water beside their path. Before them the giant mass of Hermon lifted its snow-capped head, and by the swiftly flowing streams that rush from a cavern at its base they entered the recesses of this mountainous region where calm and quiet could be found from the world of men.

Speculation had been rife amongst them, and Jesus was anxious to hear from their own lips what He knew had passed in their minds concerning Him. Before He could impart more lessons it was necessary for them to be sure of their estimate of their knowledge. There must be a consciousness of truth before any progress can be made with it. As they sat and talked together His companions could see that something weighed heavily on His mind. At length He spoke, and asked the most momentous question of His life on earth. The first was a preparation for the second: "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" [2] He knew better than the disciples what men said about Him, but He wished them to declare

[1] St. Mark viii. 27. Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Book III. chapter ix. Hûleh 7.

[2] St. Matt. xvi. 13.

frankly what they believed to be the opinions of the people. Some, they answered, thought He was John the Baptist, and others one of the Prophets. Popular feeling had not declared that He was the Messiah. Then said Jesus, "But Whom say ye that I am?" Promptly came the reply from Peter, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." [3] The claim of Jesus was acknowledged, the seed of the Kingdom had borne fruit. Deep in the heart of Peter it had taken root, and the blessed life within him appeared in the Great Confession. In solemn yet joyous words the Master uttered His great commendation: "Blessed art thou, Simon, Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Which is in heaven." [4] Not by all the will of the flesh, nor the will of man; neither as the son of a Hebrew, nor by his own unaided efforts had he reached his state of heart. Divine power acting on the development of his understanding had revealed to him the Son of God. "No one," Jesus has said, "knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." [5]

Further evidence of approval was given by Jesus in His promise to Simon. "Thou art Peter," He said, "and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." [6]

Something in the nature of their surroundings contributed to the significance of the great confession, and of the great commendation, and the promise of the future. The incomparably fine situation in which they stood, combining in an unusual degree the elements of grandeur and beauty, was further enhanced by the majestic mountain towering above them. At its foot a great red limestone cliff, the solid buttress of the mountain's flank, shone in the sunlight amidst the foliage of the

[3] St. Matt. xvi. 16.
[4] St. Matt. xvi. 17.
[5] St. Matt. xi. 27.
[6] St. Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

groves of trees. Underneath the rock springs of living water [7] burst into a large basin and rushed together through the rich soil of the valley on their way to the Dead Sea. In the face of the rock a large natural grotto had become the sanctuary of the heathen; above it they had reared great temples for the worship of false gods. Panium [8] (also Paneas), the original name of the city, dedicated to the god Pan, indicates the nature of the religion of its inhabitants. Remains are still visible of their idolatrous practices, and the old name is recognized in the modern appellation of Banias.

The living truth [9] which burst from the lips of Peter, the rock on which the Church was built, had an extraordinary application when Christ ascended the mountain, placed His feet on the symbols of false worship, and was there transfigured before three of His Apostles. From the mountain He turned in the direction of the river flowing onward to the Sea of Death, from whence its water is carried by evaporation to the clouds of heaven, and steadfastly set His face towards Jerusalem, to His Death, and Resurrection, and Ascension.

The living water, the solid rock, the transfigured Lord, help us to realize the importance of the words of Jesus. They also assist us in unravelling the mystery which has perplexed His followers ever since the words were uttered.[10] Of all His

[7] The source of the river Jordan. [8] Josephus, *Ant.* Book XV. 10. 3.

[9] *Cf.* St. John iv. 10; vii. 38.

[10] In *Great Truths,* by Dr. St. Clair Tisdale, p. 54, are the opinions of many leading early Christian writers.

"Augustine, for instance, says, 'On this Rock *which thou hast confessed* will I build My Church' (*Tract* 124 on John), explaining that the *faith* which Peter had professed was the Rock. (See also *De Trinitate,* Book II. chapter xxviii., and Cyril of Alexandria's Com. on Isa. xliv. 21–23). Elsewhere he says, 'The Rock is Christ, Whom Simon having confessed, as the whole Church confesses Him, was named Peter' (*Retractations,* i. 21).

"Ambrose writes: 'The Rock is Christ.' (*On Luke's Gospel,* Book VI.)

"Hilary says: 'On this rock of the confession is the building of the Church' (*On the Trinity,* Book VI.).

"Chrysostom writes, 'Upon this Rock, that is, upon the faith of confession.' (*Hom.* 65 on Matt. xvi.)."

In all, forty-four Fathers teach that Peter's faith is the Rock; sixteen

sayings, none have been so grievously misused. Scholars in all ages have explained their meaning and disagreed with one another over their interpretation. Papal claims have laid hold on them for their special benefit, and their arrogance would deprive the rest of Christendom from participating in the truth. Without Christ there would be no Church, and without the living truth no life in its members. In Him is the Church, and from Him is the Church, and from Him flows its limpid faith, the witness of His life. Down the glades of life it rushes, through the spreading waters of its lakes, narrowed by the limitations of its banks, into the sea that has no outlet but heaven above. Life and death and glory are its significant features unveiled in the Life and Death and Ascension of the Christ.

One part of the work of Jesus had now been successfully accomplished. His Apostles recognized His Divine Sonship, their place in the Kingdom was assigned and their work determined. They were given the assurance of the power to teach, and to declare the relative value of the precepts they taught, essential or non-essential, what were binding and what were not binding, and for this work they were promised the direction of the Holy Spirit.

They were told not to publish their knowledge of the mystery of the Messiahship to those who could not discern the Spirit of Jesus. Their own knowledge, still immature, needed strengthening before they were ready to divulge the secret of His life. Although He was their King, His Kingdom was not yet clear to them, their minds were still clouded with earthly hopes. These vain imaginings of the things of sense were to be removed for ever in order that they might know the true nature of the Kingdom of God.

He began to teach them that He must go to Jerusalem, and there He must die; that a violent death awaited Him at the hands of His enemies. Hints of distant suffering had been

that Christ Himself is the Rock; seventeen that Peter is the Rock; eight that the whole body of the Apostles, with Peter as its chief, is the Rock. See Littledale, *Plain Reasons*, p. 25 note.

given to them before; now He stated deliberately, but calmly, that His death was approaching, and that He would rise again the third day. He withheld details of His last days because the disciples were unable to bear them; even these statements were misunderstood, their minds being often confused by His language; they put them aside as mysterious, with feelings of awe, afraid to ask for an explanation. Peter thought he had penetrated their meaning, and interrupted the current of His Lord's speech in the exaltation of his mind, but the Spirit he had received to perceive the truth of Christ was overcome by the natural feeling of pride in the eulogy passed upon him. Stepping up to Jesus and taking [11] Him by the hand, or dress, he said confidently, as if he knew better, "God forbid; this shall not happen." [12] This intrusion and interference was prompted by affection; Peter was unconscious of wrong, but Jesus saw in it the hand of the Tempter. He saw through the disguise, and, casting the temptation away, said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." [13]

By their surprise, Jesus saw they misunderstood His sayings. The announcement of His death seemed to destroy all their hopes; there still lingered in them selfish aims and selfish motives. He said, "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." [14] Some people had discovered their retreat and gathered round the disciples, and His words were addressed to all who could hear Him. He wished to teach them the unworldliness of His Kingdom, that the self-denial required in following Him is not of some pleasure or profit, but the denial of the whole of self, all its natural motives and impulses that come before the claim of Christ. The disciples had heard something about taking up the cross before; [15] now the Lord tells them it is a mark of discipleship. Bearing the cross must not be confused with

[11] προσλαβόμενος α'τόν. St. Matt. xvi. 21.

[12] ἵλεώς σοι; supply εἴη ὁ Θεός. See Alford (St. Matt. xvi. 22). An authoritative declaration. St. Matt. xvi. 22.

[13] St. Mark viii. 33. [14] St. Mark viii. 34. [15] St. Matt. x. 38.

the burden of the ordinary experience of life. No man can escape from his burden — it is universal; but the taking up of the cross is a man's deliberate choice. He may refuse it; and many do refuse. The self-denial required is of the highest type, analogous to Christ's emptying Himself of His glory to become man,[16] and the cross is borne with a new meaning in its being associated with the reference Jesus made to His death. The call of the cross is the call for life's great adventure; deep calling unto deep, the call from the depth of the great heart of God in Christ Jesus to the hidden depths of the human soul. Each of the disciples in his own way responded. It was into an experience of the unknown they resolved to pass with their Master. All that men will know or need to know about the call of the cross they will learn from Him. They will learn that there is something better in life than having what they want. It is giving what they have.

A change had come over the disciples. From the depth of their souls a living fountain had burst.[17] The desire to give had been born within them, and in the giving of themselves they had gained fresh power.

The secret of their new experience lay in the revelation of God within them through their recognition of His Divine Son.

It was a great thing for them to know how to begin the new adventure, and do it with a prospect of success. Men do not always fail through lack of effort. Failure is more often the result of a defective view of the relative value of effort. It is when men deal with material forces as if they made up the whole of life that a wrong estimate is formed. They forget to take into account the soul, something which is superior to matter, the most essential factor in man's destiny. Unsuspected powers lie hidden in a slumbering soul — powers mysterious and profound, which, when awakened by the call of the Divine Spirit, are mightier than material force.

Without a thought for the soul the world beckons men along an easy path, for what they may gain and the glory of it.

[16] Phil. ii. 5–8.

[17] *Cf.* St. John iv. 14; vii. 38.

And the world has many things in store for men which they may naturally and legitimately desire to possess; but the world has no voice to correspond with the mystic harmonies of the soul.

Along the same road there is the cross of Christ, invisible to the eye of sense, but from the Christ Who bore it comes the call to a higher life than the world can offer, the life He lived; for a nobler service than selfish interest, the life laid down.

Men sometimes speak of different roads, and the parting of the ways, as if there were two; but the strait gate and the broad way lie along the same track. It is not so much the road men take as what there is within them that makes the difference. "The strait gate," so seldom sought, and "the broad way" so easily found, rest side by side. Eager people seek the little gate,[18] the thoughtless pass with the multitude. Neither the lure of the world nor the call of the cross will determine the issue of a man's choice, but something within him.[19] When the choice is made the trial is not yet over; life is continually passing into new circumstances demanding fresh efforts, and Jesus said man must take up his cross daily.[20]

Since Jesus died the cross is no longer a symbol of disgrace. A marvellous change has been brought by it into the affairs of men. Christ's death so illumined the cross that it is now the model of the holiest life. Faith in Him meant a great deal more for the first followers than for those who bear His name today. When He called them He had emerged from the obscurity of a Galilean village to be the Messiah, and such was His claim it contradicted the warmest hopes of Israel, and many on that account refused to have anything to do with Him. Some that became His disciples were afterwards ashamed, and some were afraid.

Jesus anticipated future events in the words which followed His call to bear the cross: "For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be

[18] See page 339.
[19] *Cf.* St. John iii. 5–7; iv. 13, 14.
[20] St. Luke ix. 23.

ashamed when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels." [21]

The men who were ashamed of Jesus were not those who did not believe on Him, but they who did not hold their faith so firmly that it inspired the soul.

Fear lurking within the heart brought the shame; it was the fear of the world, that because the man was in the world and not of it he would suffer loss. Jesus saw this also when He put the cross before His followers, and all it meant to those who were ready to bear it, and said: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" [22]

His final argument stands in logical relationship to the bartering of the higher life for apparent gain. The awful certainty of His judgment was proclaimed, and the sentence of final banishment from His presence was pronounced on those whose life had been forfeited, not by individual acts, but the collective character of the life itself.[23] He closed His address with the glorious promise of ultimate victory, by the assurance that some of those present should not taste of death until they had seen a visible manifestation of the Kingdom of God. This prediction has often been entirely associated with His Transfiguration, but that event cannot be accepted as its complete fulfilment. The unveiled glory of the Son of Man in the state that belonged to Him which met the gaze of the three Apostles on the mountain bears witness of His greatness, but He meant something more by the words "coming in His Kingdom": He meant the coming of that greatness into the world of men. And some of those present with Him when the words were uttered saw them fulfilled. In a single generation there appeared a marvellous development of the Kingdom of God, and their eyes beheld in it the glory and the greatness of the power of their Lord.

[21] St. Luke ix. 26. [22] St. Mark viii. 35, 36. [23] St. Matt. xvi. 27, 28.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE TRANSFIGURATION

For a week thoughts of the shadowy future simmered in the minds of the Apostles while they remained with their Lord in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi. Then He selected three, the special three in whom He most confided, to accompany Him up the mountain, through the rocky wilderness of its lower slopes, to a secluded spot near one of the southern crests,[1] where He might stand on the uttermost border of their national home, above all the places of false worship, and there He was transfigured. St. Luke describes the wonderful scene in these words: "As He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistering. And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with Him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him. And it came to pass, as they departed from Him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. While he thus spake there came a cloud and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered the cloud."[2] When it enfolded them they seemed as though they were wrapped in God's own mantle, and they received a higher consecration. They were stronger, braver, and better men afterwards; their vision was clearer and their faith grew bolder, but when its mighty folds enveloped them in their dense obscurity they did not know the

[1] There is nothing gained by supposing that Jesus went to the actual summit of Mount Hermon, where there are three peaks. When I ascended the mountain the journey took a day and a half from Baneas.

[2] St. Luke ix. 29–34.

fortunate result. The solemn hush which they felt on the mountain-top, when all the sounds of the lower world were muffled, enabled them to concentrate their thoughts on the Divine mystery by which they were surrounded; and in the solitude and silence — that eternal silence — they heard the Eternal Voice, the still small voice that could not have been heard in the din of the plain and the clash of worldly interests. It came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son; hear Him. And when the voice was passed, Jesus was found alone." [3]

It was while He prayed, as He continued in prayer, that the fashion of His countenance altered; the intensity of the nature of His communion changed Him; and His Transfiguration exhibits His closest and most intimate fellowship with the Father. Earnest believers, in their happiest moments, when the things of earth are forgotten, and the presence of God alone is apparent, realize a refining and an illuminating power within them; and when they return among men there is a glory around them. Although they are not aware of it, others see it, like Moses when he left God's presence: "he wist not that the skin of his face shone." [4]

It is not impossible to believe that if there had been no sin in man, no stain on the garment of human nature, a Transfiguration might have been the means of his passing from earth to his eternal home. Now we see here only a transformation of his spirit. The transfiguration reveals the entire change of human nature, what will follow after life on earth is done. In the transfiguration of Christ we see the likeness of God in the perfection of human nature, and Moses and Elias, men of God, in the nature of their perfection.

The splendour that lit up the face and form of Jesus was not a subjective psychological phenomenon due to the state of mind of weary men in a strange place. It has been recorded as a historical fact [5] by three writers, who obtained their in-

[3] St. Luke ix. 35, 36. [4] Exodus xxxiv. 29.
[5] St. Matt. xvii. 1; St. Mark ix. 2; St. Luke ix. 28.

formation from eye-witnesses, one of whom, St. Peter, in his second epistle a generation later, referred to his experience on the holy mountain.[6] Nor had Jesus a desire to overwhelm them with an awe-inspiring sight. He wished to reveal to His earthly companions, who were being trained by Him for the triumphant enterprise of the future, to whom He was making Himself known by the strongest link of affection, the glory of the life in the Kingdom of God. While they slept He prayed, and when they were awake they saw His glory, and with Him stood Moses and Elias in the glory of the inheritance of the saints. The light that shone on the mountain, the glory of the Son, came from within Him, the form of God in the beauty of His soul. We need not be surprised that Peter said, "It is good for us to be here," that he wished to abide in the supernal radiance of Eternal Life. He evidently thought that he was in heaven, and wished to remain, and said: "Let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias."[7] Although we may not be able to enter into the transport of his delight, we can see something which he could not perhaps at the moment discern in the Transfiguration of His Lord, something of the meaning and extent of His great renunciation.

None but Christ could fulfil the redemptive purpose of God. For its accomplishment He had to leave the state which belonged to Him and take upon Himself the sin of man and die on the cross to put it away. He might have avoided the cross, but His joy was to do the Father's will, and He saw in man's redemption a greater glory than the unsullied brightness of His own life. Willingly He renounced His glory, and looked forward to His great achievement, setting His face towards Jerusalem, for to Jerusalem He must go. Out of a cloud His disciples heard the Voice of God commending to them His beloved Son. As the shadows of the cross loomed in the distance the resurrection glory was close beside it. Moses and Elias stood talking with Him of His decease,[8] His exodus, which

[6] 2 Peter i. 18. [7] St. Luke ix. 33. [8] ἔξοδον = decease; *cf.* 2 Peter i. 15.

He must accomplish at Jerusalem. In speaking of His exodus they were looking beyond the cross. Their departure had been different from that of other men; both of them were removed from the world in a mysterious manner, one without death, the other by death, but such that his body followed not the lot of the bodies of men. Both had been on a holy mountain and had seen visions of God and had heard His voice.

But for Jesus there was a cross; certainly it was not the end; His exodus meant a passing beyond it, but it had to be borne. And He, Whose instinct for fact and reality knew exactly the amount of suffering it entailed, knew also its necessity. His death stood for something infinitely greater than an example, something far more important than a martyr's fate. He identified Himself with the world's sin and sorrow, and by His obedience. He so identified Himself with the will of God that, in submitting to death, He approved of it in accepting it as the judgment of God on sin.

We have to think like God to see the great renunciation, the awful death His Son had set before Him. Then shall we see the magnitude of His sacrifice and the glory of man's salvation.

The Transfiguration is a sublime event in the history of mankind. It seems, perhaps, an isolated episode in the life of Christ; to St. Peter it was a token of eternal happiness, heaven itself, where he wished to abide. It served to reconcile the three Apostles to the sufferings of the Messiah by revealing His glory, and to their own trials by the revelation of the glory of the saints of God.

All the processes of the old world were preparatory, and belonged to the one great scheme, one Divine event towards which all creation moved. So Moses and Elias represented former efforts in the process of redemption, and stood before Christ, Who is the fulfilment of the law and the embodiment of prophecy, the Son of Man, in Whom the process of redemption was about to be consummated.

And when the silence which the three Apostles were commanded to keep might be broken, the unveiled glory of Christ

would be their strength, and the word of God their inspiration; they would realize a fuller meaning in the great event of the Transfiguration, the gathering of the past efforts of the law and the prophets of Judaism into Christ, from Whom in a wider stream of universal love there would flow through them, His witnesses on the mountain, the greater glory of the power of their crucified and ascended Lord.

All that had passed before His Transfiguration was the sublime preface of our Lord's work, the opening of the portals of the Kingdom of Heaven. The deepest truths of His teaching followed this event, and gradually led to the closing scenes which completed His redemptive work. From the mountain where the state which belonged to Him was revealed He steadfastly set His face towards Jerusalem.

Opposition had appeared in many quarters; the fickle multitude, disappointed and baffled by His manner of life and teaching, allowed their affection for Him to cool. Unless He consented to become their King, set their country free, and exalt their nation, there seemed to be no more reason to follow Him. All His love for them, and the beneficent employment of His wonderful power, had failed to arouse in them a more favourable disposition towards a higher life. His sacred claim for their allegiance transcended their desires, and as it rose in elevation the greater were the demands it made upon them, until they saw the fulfilment of their hopes slip away, and they no longer cared for His teaching. It became more and more difficult to understand, and was restricted chiefly to the disciples on whom He relied for the future.

CHAPTER XXVII

TOWARDS JERUSALEM

From the grandeur of the mountain scene Jesus and His three Apostles descended into the valley of tears, of suffering, and unbelief. While He and His chosen three were on the height the remainder of the Apostles were engaged with an increasing number of people below. In the midst of the crowd was a poor tortured child, and the disciples, unable to help him, were confused by their failure. Through the pressure of their labour they had become exhausted, their faith and energy had sunk low, and, sorely beset by exulting scribes, they were alarmed. At this juncture, when apparently defeated, Jesus came and asked, "What question ye amongst yourselves?"[1] but neither the assailants of the disciples, nor the disciples, who were conscious of their failure, replied. The father of the afflicted boy came forth from the crowd and declared that he had brought his lunatic child to be healed, and the disciples could not cast out the spirit that distressed him. Jesus was very much troubled, and exclaimed, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him to Me." No sooner was he before Jesus than he was seized with another fit, and "he fell to the ground and wallowed foaming." Jesus asked the father how long he had been afflicted. He answered, from a child; then described the painful malady which had so long tormented him, and said, "If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Using the same words in reply, our Lord said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." And the father, with tears in his eyes, instantly cried, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." Seeing the multitude increase, and the people anxious to gaze

[1] St. Mark ix. 16.

on the scene before Him, Jesus turned to the child, rebuked the "deaf and dumb spirit," and said, "I charge thee, come out of him, and no more enter into him."[2] One great struggle followed, and the boy, after the convulsion, appeared to be dead; but Jesus took him by the hand and restored him to his father.

The impression made by the miracle was felt by all the people, but not in the same way; the disciples wondered why they had failed, and when they reached their resting-place they asked their Lord. He answered, "Because of your unbelief"; then, with a dramatic gesture towards the mountain, and in true Eastern hyperbole, He illustrated the operation of true faith, saying: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say to this mountain, remove hence into yonder place: and it shall remove: and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit, this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."[3] They had evidently, in His absence, forgotten to seek the necessary help, and relied on their unequal and unaided strength.

It was not possible to remain any longer in the country of the northern border; the people had discovered the retreat of Jesus, His seclusion was invaded, so He moved with His Apostles southwards, and, in order to avoid the public, they left the main road and followed the by-paths of the hills leading towards Capernaum.

Soon after leaving Cæsarea Philippi, His death having begun to occupy a large place in His mind, He repeated once more His statement that He would be delivered into the hands of men, and be killed, and rise again the third day. "But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him."[4] The old familiar intimacy changed as He seemed to move in a more exalted sphere. They realized the difference, which they showed by a greater reverence, and a constraint that occasionally came between their feelings towards their immortal Lord and their bewildering ideas respecting His fu-

[2] St. Mark ix. 25. [3] St. Matt. xvii. 20, 21. [4] St. Mark ix. 32.

ture position; but there still remained in their minds the expectation of His triumphant declaration of a Messianic reign on earth. Between this hope and the exaltation of the spirit in His fellowship they hovered in doubtful experience, yet they clung with splendid loyalty to His Person, and a glorious faith in His guidance, in defiance of all the reasoning of their confused minds.

As they proceeded on their journey they were prevented from walking all together in one body by the rugged nature of the country with its narrow and uneven footpaths. Their Master at the head of the procession was followed by His first disciples, and the rest farther behind. With their dull minds bent on the development of their Master's Kingdom, and remembering doubtless the preference shown to Peter, James, and John, the disciples "disputed among themselves who should be the greatest." While conscious of their strife, Jesus said nothing until they arrived in Capernaum. When they were settled together, probably in Peter's house, He asked them, "What was it that we disputed among yourselves by the way?" [5] Conscience-stricken by His question, they were silent with shame. He sat down and renewed His teaching on the denial of selfish interest and the dignity of service, and told them that the road to honour lay along the path of humility.[6] He took a child and set him in the midst to press home the needful lesson that worldly ambition and selfishness have nothing to do with the Kingdom of God, that the entrance to that state of life is gained by a childlike spirit, and that he is the greatest who possesses the exquisite beauty of its vision of unworldliness, its simple faith and infinite trust. They were to be as children in the world, and he who received one of such a childlike spirit in His name received Him, and not only Him but the Father Who had sent Him. John interrupted Him with a question relating to His name. He enquired if they had acted rightly when they found a man casting out devils in His name,[7] and had forbidden him be-

[5] St. Mark ix. 33. [6] St. Mark ix. 36. [7] St. Mark ix. 38.

cause he was not one of them. Jesus said they were not to forbid a man acting in His name for the welfare of men. He who was not against them in the work was for them.[8]

Continuing His discourse with the child before them, He warned them against putting stumbling-blocks in the way of those who were seeking to do His work, and the awful peril awaiting the men who turned any one from the path of innocence and truth. He told them to resist the temptation with the greatest sacrifice, that any form of offence had better be removed than risk a total loss.[9]

He further instructed them in the duty of mutual peace for the removal of offences and disagreements between brethren, first by private dealing then public appeal.[10] Peter, anxious to know the extent of forgiveness, asked how many times one man should forgive another, and was informed that forgiveness is unlimited. It is a state, like sympathy and love, not something that can be withheld or given at pleasure. When God forgives He gives forgiveness, and the man that really appreciates forgiveness acts on it. An illustration was shown in a simple parable of a servant, who, having been forgiven by a king a debt of 10,000 talents (£2,000,000), went and seized a fellow-servant by the throat and would not forgive him the smaller debt of a hundred pence (£3 2*s*. 6*d*.).[11]

While He was engaged in teaching the disciples a collector of the Temple tax summoned Peter, and enquired if his Master paid it. A half-shekel was demanded from every adult Jew over twenty years of age for the maintenance of the Temple. It was due on the fifteenth day of the month of Adar (March), but Jesus had been absent from Capernaum, and it had apparently been overlooked. The questioning of Peter, instead of a direct appeal to Jesus, showed a reverence for his Master that had been created in the minds of the officials. Peter answered in the affirmative, and went and informed Jesus. If he had

[8] On another occasion (St. Matt. xii. 30) Jesus said, "He that is not with Me is against Me," but this is not contradictory, but complementary.
[9] St. Mark ix. 43–48. [10] St. Matt. xviii. 15–21. [11] St. Matt. xviii. 24.

thought more of his Master's position, even of his own confession, he might have been less hasty in his reply to the collector. Without waiting for Peter's explanation of his impulsive answer, Jesus, in a happy way, accosted His disciple, saying, "What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? Of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto Him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free." [12] He might have claimed exemption from payment as the Son of God. He need not therefore pay the tax. His gentle and loving manner towards the Apostle removed his embarrassment, but the obligation remained; he had told the collector the half-shekel might be expected. Rather than assert His right as He had shown it to His disciple, and increase his difficulty, and for the sake of peace and good-will, He would pay. He submitted to the law although He was above the law, and told Peter to go to the sea and catch a fish, and, on opening its mouth, a stater would be found; "that take," He said, "and give unto them for Me and thee," [13] the stater being the equivalent of two half-shekels, the amount claimed by the collectors of the tribute for two persons.

[12] St. Matt. xvii. 26. [13] St. Matt. xvii. 27.

CHAPTER XXVIII

FAREWELL TO GALILEE

Jesus had no intention of remaining in Capernaum; His Galilean ministry was finished, and, according to the world's estimate of results, it has almost been accounted a failure. Even so, the calculation is based on imperfect knowledge. The world has no vision of the future; it depends on things seen, having no capacity for computing relative values between the visible and the invisible, the most important part is unreckoned. The greatest test of success is found in the subsequent history of what has been taught; not in the number of adherents to a particular doctrine, but in the progress and development of the truth embodied in the lesson. When we consider the sayings of Jesus without reference to His life, His statement that they would never pass away in the sense of becoming obsolete has been proved to be literally true. When His life is reviewed with His words the contrast between them and those of the greatest human thinkers and speakers is so great that no comparison can be instituted which does not increase the admiration of men for the work of Jesus, and show how vast is the difference between the highest level of human reason and the mind of Christ. But there is something more: His work is an operation that never ceases.

The work of Jesus of Nazareth was no failure. He had placed the feet of men and women on new levels and opened their eyes to new summits. Uncertain gleams of Divine light have ever since been breaking through larger rifts, and illuminating broader areas of human life. In the light of His life and work we see more clearly the frontiers and features of His Kingdom, the development of God's image in man's nature, and the rule of God's law in the organization of man's life. Through the men He taught it has been transmitted,

and down the Christian ages it has been coming with a clearer vision and stricter verdict. Before two centuries had passed His Kingdom shook the imperial throne of Rome, and every Empire which has opposed His Kingdom has perished. If the millions, whose personal devotion as His subjects was the means of increasing His sway, were to rise from the dead, the whole earth would ring with their glad acclaim, "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ."

Yet while He lived on earth none really understood Him. His life was too complex for ordinary observers, the boundless reach of His Spirit soared beyond the finite mind; all classes of people saw in Him what they thought were inconsistencies. They judged after the manner of men, and their perplexity increased with their disappointed expectations. They could not understand His refusal to accept their homage when they desired to make Him King. Such a Leader Who had faltered, as they believed, at the last step lacked the boldness for the venture they hoped would succeed. They could not realize that there was something more lofty than an earthly throne which prevented Him from accepting the acclamation of the multitude. Even His disciples wondered why His conduct had not been more in accord with their hope of the Messiah; and the Pharisees were unable to appreciate His attitude as a religious teacher towards the Publicans and sinners. Outside the circle of His disciples, though many people regarded Him as a prophet, there was not a general belief in His Messianic claim. The nature of His teaching had repelled many who were first counted among His followers, His enemies became more active, and the Pharisees, particularly virulent, represented Him as a teacher of blasphemy. Galilee had rejected Him.

He had, however, struck a chord in the hearts of many men and women which brought them into His fellowship, and some of them submitted to His guidance with unswerving loyalty. He had also created in them a desire to know Him better, and they caught from His life an enthusiasm for righteousness and an heroic sacrifice and toil to make righteousness thrive on

the earth. Twelve men had gone forth in His name, with His authority, to proclaim its power. Seventy more were ready at His word to follow in their steps. And five hundred disciples met Him after His resurrection.[1]

Before Jesus departed from the cities on the side of the lake He surveyed the scene of His labours. He would not have been human as we know humanity if His last thoughts had been without sorrow; nor would He have been Divine, if the Judge of all the earth, as He so often represented Himself,[2] had overlooked the sin of man.

Mingled with many happy memories of the people were regrets for their wilful neglect of great opportunities. Over the pleasant fields of Galilee, through the crowded thoroughfares of its towns, and in the guest-chambers of the inhabitants, His radiant and majestic personality had exhibited the love and power of God in works of grace and mercy. And on the shores of the sea His ceaseless toil for the people's welfare had day by day been marked with a variable response. Most of the people clung to their old ways in selfish satisfaction, and neglected their great salvation. They were insensible of the presence of God, and desired to be independent of Him, a fault, in large and flourishing communities, where men shrink individually, which Jesus charged against the cities of the lake. The personal insignificance of each individual in his relation to the multitude was the snare; dreading to be solitary, one supported another to keep God in Christ at a distance. The flood of worldliness and unconcern rolled over them, and the idea of a solemn union with God became indistinct, and faded away. The pity of it all, and the tragedy, moved the Son of Man, and in those memorable words of woe which are recalled by the solitude and desolation of the shore of the Galilean Sea, He uttered His sad and awful farewell: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethsaida, . . . and thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down unto hell."[3]

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 6. [2] St. John. v. 22; ix. 39. [3] St. Matt. xi. 21–23.

The tangled garden wilderness of lovely Gennesareth remains; its silver strand is chafed by the incessant ripple of its little waves. Wild oleanders fringe the beach and drop their crimson blossoms in the water. Flowers still bloom, birds of brilliant plumage flit across the waste; but devastation reigns, the handiwork of man has perished; of the cities there is nothing but scattered stones and giant weeds.

Even in His sorrow there rose within the heart of Jesus a great compassion, the love of God for man flowed over Him, and a tenderness surpassing human thought was expressed in His appeal: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." [4] In the busy streets and market-place of Capernaum, the porters with their heavy loads suggested the sin-laden objects of their Saviour's pity.

Many porters in Eastern towns are peasants whose evil lives have become obnoxious to the residents of their village, from whence they were turned to drift into the lowest depths of degradation, and consort with the dogs of the city streets. Something must be done by them for a living, and the most accessible calling is that of the porter. Those who are not outcasts from a village have been drawn from the lowest classes of the people, and the porters share with the beasts the burdens of the rich. For greater convenience in bearing a heavy load, a yoke is fixed across the shoulders; a greater weight and larger burden can then be carried. A fellow-feeling of compassion is found amongst the porters; when rest is needed, one beckons to another, and the two stand back to back, locking their loads together while they stand upright for a brief respite from their toil. Thus one man bears his own burden and helps the other at the same time [5] but neither of them is free; his temporary relief comes from the aid he receives from the other. Jesus offered permanent support for the burden of the soul, an eternal benefit for mankind in His strength.

[4] St. Matt. xi. 28, 29.

[5] Gal. vi. 2–5.

He understood and sympathized with human need, and He knew He had the power to alleviate the misery and the poverty of the overborne, not by a system or an organization of machine-made efficiency, but the means of helping in His own life. His call for men to come to Him is for them to get into touch with His Spirit for their inspiration. This is the way in which He served the world. Others seek the improvement of the conditions of human life by external devices, schemes, systems, official measures, which supplant individual initiative and incapacitate the sense of personal responsibility. Jesus spoke of a rest which He gave to those who turned to Him, a peace of mind surpassing all the world can offer, a composure of spirit beyond all human understanding. For the weary and the broken-hearted, the blind and the bruised, it meant the power of a new hope. Thus Jesus approached all social questions from within; He dealt with the individual; His aim was to awaken in man a sense of his manhood and lift him into a higher plane than the miserable condition of existence in which he dwelt.

Whatever may be the disadvantages of life, however difficult its social or economic circumstances, the spirit of man may be fortified to overcome them. The teaching of Jesus furnishes every man with the means for improvement by inspiring him with the knowledge that he need never be alone, but may have One with him permanently to support him in every situation of his life.

Jesus tarried a little while in Galilee, but He taught no more in public. His natural relations came to Him in a querulous spirit,[6] dissatisfied with the change they had noticed in His methods; they asked why He did not go to the Feast in Jerusalem and manifest Himself to the world. He answered their presumptuous interference with calm and quiet forbearance. He told them to go to the Feast, that His time had not yet been fulfilled, thus indicating the fact that His time would come, but not when they expected nor in the way they desired.

[6] St. John vii. 3.

It was enough for them to know that He would not accompany them to the Feast, so that they could give no answer to enquiries respecting His appearing. Although they had not believed on Him, there was a certain pride in His fame, and a hope of future greatness, and they wished to hasten its approach. Irritated by the delay, and the timidity which seemed to them to have become a feature of His conduct, they expressed their feelings with undisguised contempt. They mistook His composure and His sublime confidence amidst many disappointments for cowardice. They could not understand Him, and it was useless for Him to disclose His plans to those who were unable to realize the tremendous issue involved in His purpose. They might go to the Feast; they had nothing to fear; nothing depended on their journey. For Him it was a different matter. He would go to the Feast, but not with the caravan, in the noisy company of Galilean pilgrims.

When His brethren left Him He set out on His journey, not openly but in secret; that is, not according to the usual method of travelling to Jerusalem for a Feast, attached to a large procession.

Escorted by His disciples, He walked from place to place, "teaching and journeying towards Jerusalem." [7] As He slowly departed from the neighbourhood of the lake a surprising incident occurred.[8] Some apparently friendly Pharisees, probably equally anxious to get rid of Jesus, intimated to Him that Herod wished to kill Him, and bade Him hasten across the border out of the tyrant's way. Jesus answered their entreaties with a message of contempt, and said, "Go ye and tell that fox, Behold I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected," [9] using the ordinary method of speech, meaning a little longer. He must indeed go away for the accomplishment of His work, but not through fear of Herod. His dauntless spirit knew no danger, His courage never failed.

He went over the plain west of the heights of Hattin, down

[7] St. Luke xiii. 22. [8] St. Luke xiii. 31, 32. [9] St. Luke xiii. 32.

the slope where the Crusaders afterwards rushed in feverish panic to their final overthrow. Near where the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ was first proclaimed a false Christian kingdom perished. Jesus walked down the shadowless way to the great caravan road round the base of Tabor, preaching to the people in the towns and villages on His way to the south, to whom He made His last appeal and delivered His last message, the message of salvation. As He pressed it home to the hearts of His hearers, one of them asked, "Are there few that be saved?" The man's heart had been moved by the words of Jesus, but he was unwilling to decide, and adopted the usual course of escaping from embarrassment by asking a controversial question in the hope of satisfying his conscience without the surrender of his will. Jesus showed him that the answer was not in the number being saved, but whether he was one of them, and significantly pointed to the necessity of entering the strait gate.[10] The figure was suggested by a familiar picture, and the meaning lies on the surface. The strait gate is the small opening for pedestrians in the side of the city gate. Within living memory the gates of modern Jerusalem were closed at night, and by the dawn of the next morning a large concourse of people had assembled with the produce of their gardens and fields for the market of the day, and patiently waited for the watchman to open the little gate. The most eager and anxious persons in the crowd moved strenuously towards it, striving for admission one by one before the wider doors were opened for the bulk of the people. Few entered the narrow way, the majority were careless and thoughtless, and well content to walk along the broader and easier road.

From the metaphor of the "strait gate" Jesus turned His hearers' attention to a picture of the great Feast of the Kingdom,[11] the usual representation of the greatest happiness in which all men desire to participate. He reminded them that privileges once enjoyed and opportunities offered may be forfeited by neglect; that "once the Master of the house is risen

[10] St. Luke xiii. 24. [11] St. Luke xiii. 25.

up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; and He shall answer and say unto you: I know not whence ye are. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. But He shall say, I tell you, I know not whence ye are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." The doom of Israel was then pronounced, and the salvation of the Gentiles predicted.

Jesus, having crossed the Plain of Esdraelon, evidently intended to go through Samaria by the central route and there deliver a final message, and He sent two of His Apostles in advance to announce His arrival; but His design was frustrated by the extraordinary refusal of common hospitality. This astounding offence excited the just indignation of James and John, who asked their Master for a signal judgment on the guilty people. But Jesus answered their fiery outburst of wrath in admonition by saying they knew not what spirit was to be in His messengers. He came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

The rejection of the Samaritans made it necessary to seek another place of rest. In all probability the opposition came from the people of Ginea,[12] En-gannim (modern Jenin), the frontier village on the border of the plain of Esdraelon. Turning east, Jesus and His company went along the boundary to a Jewish village on the edge of the Jordan Valley, and, as they proceeded, the refusal of hospitality having apparently touched three of our Lord's followers who had not yet declared their willingness to become His disciples, they announced their decision.[13] The first was a Scribe.[14] He came and said, "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest," thinking doubtless that his office entitled him to favourable notice and a better position in the new Kingdom. Jesus promptly answered, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have

[12] Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Book III. chap. iii. 4.
[13] St. Luke ix. 57–62.
[14] St. Matt. viii. 19; mentioned in a different connection.

nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." The impetuous Scribe was not rejected; the place of the disciple was shown to him in the lot of the Master, and he was left to make his own choice. There was no earthly gain in the service of Jesus; not even comfort might be expected by His followers; nothing but a share in His life of privation.

Next came a hesitating disciple, anxious to follow, but held back by family claims. He said, "Suffer me first to bury my father." "Follow Me," was the stern reply; "let the dead bury their dead." His father was yet alive, and he asked for permission to remain at home as long as he lived, until the claims of earth were satisfied and he was free.[15] Jesus shook his irresolute will for an immediate decision to leave the world and the affairs of the world to settle themselves. He was called to a separate kind of existence, for a change in his life to one altogether different from the world's life; not for an alteration of its outward form, but for the introduction of a new spirit.

The third said, "Lord, I will follow Thee, but let me first bid them farewell which are at home at my house." To this half-hearted follower He answered, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." The ploughman commences his work as soon as the summer is passed and the first rains fall. He leaves his snug cottage to face the blustering rain and the biting wind that blows across the hills. From the comfort in the house to the cold without the change is great, and a determination to endure is necessary for the work before him. A glance behind at what he has left discourages the weak spirit struggling for existence, the thought sets before desire the object on which it fixes its attention, an irresolute will inevitably causes a man to postpone his labour and the lost opportunity is followed by a greater loss. "A sluggard will not plough by reason of

[15] A corpse cannot be kept in the East for more than a day. If the father had been dead the son would have been at home, and the interment would have taken place in the evening.

the cold, and therefore shall he beg in harvest." [16] The unknown future is for the strong in hand and heart, and they never falter; the goal towards which they are slowly but progressively moving is the glowing East; the past is for the weak, where the sun goes down.

[16] Proverbs xx. 4.

CHAPTER XXIX

ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM

HAVING been forbidden to pass through Samaria, the only route to Jerusalem for Jesus lay down the Jordan Valley, and to reach it a public highway went due east from En-gannim (Ginea, modern Jenin) "through the midst of Samaria and Galilee [1]— that is, between the two provinces — to Scythopolis (modern Beisan). From this flourishing Decapolitan city of palm-groves and gardens the road led direct to Pella, the first city in Perea, ten miles distant across the Jordan; and another road on the western bank of the river connected Scythopolis with the cities in the valley, Archelais, Thasaelis, and Jericho.

As Jesus and His disciples passed along the border road from the inhospitable inhabitants of En-gannim they were met at the entrance to a certain village on the Galilean side of the boundary by ten lepers, nine Jews and one Samaritan. Jews and Samaritans often exhibited their racial animosities in their hostile treatment of one another, but in the mystery of sorrow at the unchanging heart of things an irrepressible sense of harmony brought them together. Conscious of their miserable condition, the lepers stood apart from the traffic on the road, scanning the faces of pedestrians for a sign of compassion. Recognizing Jesus as the Leader of the band of travellers, they appealed to Him for help. His reputation for good deeds had reached them; they may even have seen His face when He wandered from village to village on an unrecorded journey. In response to their appeal, He told them to go for inspection to the priests, the Jews to Jerusalem and the Samaritan to Mount Gerizim. His direction tested their faith. It must

[1] St. Luke xvii. 11: διὰ μέσου Σαμαρείας καὶ Γαλιλαίας = "between Samaria and Galilee," *i.e.* on the frontiers of both.

have been an ordeal to accept His word and act upon it when nothing was done for them at the moment He addressed them. He bade them go as if they were already cleansed, and they had to trust Him by making the venture with apparently no reasonable prospect of success. Such confidence had they in Him that they took Him at His word and set out on their journey. As they went, before they had gone far on the road, an unseen power removed the foul disease. In the act of obedience they had obtained the blessing. One of them turned back; he felt something was due to his Benefactor, and he left his companions to throw himself at the feet of the One Whom he believed had worked the miracle, and to glorify God for his signal deliverance. "And he was a Samaritan." No Jew returned thanks, only the Samaritan; one man out of ten, and he according to expectation the most unlikely.

Jesus accepted his gratitude and bestowed on him a richer benefit; then He remarked to His disciples, "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found to give glory to God save this stranger." [2] They were enabled to see a difference in the attitude of the grateful Samaritan leper from the attitude of the Samaritan people who refused to grant a passage through their country, and also from that of the nine Jews healed of their leprosy.

It was an incident that served a useful purpose, at a most appropriate time, for the followers of Jesus to perceive with comprehending eyes that the world contained more than they had seen in the people with whom they had been directly concerned. If they had been thinking of themselves, and their own nation, and their own interests, they had a new vision of what might be done for strangers, and what strangers might do in return. It must have slowly dawned on the disciples that Jesus thought and acted, not for a single race, but for all mankind.

The unfortunate experience at En-gannim having been turned into another direction, another opportunity occurred

[2] St. Luke xvii. 17.

for the extension of the work of Jesus. Its universal nature having become more apparent to His disciples, He selected and commissioned Seventy of them "to go before His face into every city and place whither He himself would come," [3] and the only remaining province open to Him which He had not visited was the part of Perea south of Gadara. The seventy disciples received similar instructions to those already given to the twelve Apostles, an important injunction being added respecting their movements — the charge to hasten on their journey, in the language of the East: "Salute no one by the way." [4] It deprecates also the use of meaningless compliments that might convey a false impression.

Scribes loved salutations in the market-place.[5] Salutations often hide sinister motives; sometimes vanity demands their use; time is always wasted. An Oriental salutation is not merely a sign of recognition, an inclination of the head, or a clasp of the hand, but an elaborate ceremony with complimentary speech. It begins with a bow and friendly greeting. Expressions vary, but the following are representative.

"Good-morning, O Sheikh!" "A hundred good-mornings with peace be yours," is the reply. The hand is raised to the forehead, then lowered towards the heart, and extended to the feet, a few more compliments pass, and the two men sit together in silence. At length it is broken by one of them who says, "Peace be unto you, how are you?" "God's peace be with you," is the answer. "Thanks be to God, the Lord of the universe. I wish to ask about your health," the first speaker says. "God be praised," the other replies, and adds, "True friends find each other." To this wise utterance the response is, "Your politeness and knowledge speak out of you." The one thus addressed, disparaging himself, with mock humility says, "Oh, Sheikh! I am but a child compared with you and your excellent manners." "Now that I have seen you I beg you will allow me to continue on my way." He rises, stretches out his hand, his companion grasps it and says entreatingly,

[3] St. Luke x. 1. [4] St. Luke x. 4. [5] St. Mark xii. 38.

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us

Luke XVII: 13

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

And set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn

Luke X: 34

"Stay a while," "Are you in a hurry?" "Remember that hurry is from Satan; God preserve us." They sit together again, time flies, but they take no heed. "Hurry is from Satan."

Seventy messengers, two and two, passing through Perea in thirty-five different directions without the customary salutations created a tremendous sensation. Only men in desperate haste, bent on a most important errand, transgress the law of Oriental courtesy. And this departure from the rule of Eastern conduct excites the curiosity of the inhabitants. The spirit of enquiry quickly spreads. Wherever the messengers went their amazing method of procedure roused the populace to such a pitch of excitement that as soon as they arrived at a village and asked for the guest chamber they were followed by a crowd of people to hear what they had to say. In silent expectation men watched the strangers with eager glances while they sat at meat, and waited for their message, then discussed the news with increasing interest, as rumours had already reached them of the wonderful words of the Prophet of Galilee. In towns and cities, entrance to a house was not so easy. Men of good repute would gladly receive the messenger; the chief citizens were always prepared for guests.

Along the main roads from the Jordan they turned in various ways in scattered pairs; by the paths over the mountains towards the eastern desert; through the forests and smiling gardens of picturesque Gilead; up the steep slopes where vines and fig-trees flourished and terraces girt the ridges; down the glens and valleys into the lowlands, where belts of cornlands covered the fertile fields; on to the plateau of the south with its grazing flocks; into gay cities, small towns, and quiet villages the disciples spread the knowledge of the coming of their Lord. They spread the news over all the land. Everybody in every place heard it, and we have reason to believe that when He appeared, though little is known of His work, He sowed the seed of the kingdom that grew into the Church which flourished for a long time with greater vigour on the

Eastern side of the Jordan than the Church of the West.

There is a significance both in numbers and their respective spheres of operation calculated to excite the imagination. In the old dispensation were twelve Patriarchs, and later a Sanhedrin with seventy members. Twelve represented also the number of the Tribes of Israel; seventy the nations of the world.[6]

Various opinions have been formed, in relation to the appointment of the messengers and their message, respecting Church work and Church government. It is more evident that the extension of God's Kingdom was desired, that a new order of God's people was intended, and one neither confined within the borders of Jewish nationalism, nor the instincts of a particular race.

In the neighbourhood of Scythopolis the disciples had separated, the "Seventy" being dispatched on their mission over Jordan, while the rest of them proceeded with their Master down the Jordan Valley. The domain of Scythopolis covered a considerable portion of the plain along the river-side, and its palm-groves and gardens sheltered travellers on the first stage of the road to Jericho. A place of rest under the lee of bare hills beckoned them at nightfall in structures prepared by individual enterprise for wayfaring men. Early in the morning they entered the narrowest part of the valley, and before evening of the second day reached the next resting-place near the Damieh ford, where provision would also be made for travellers.

Not far from this important river crossing, by which Samaritans passed from their country to the eastern province, where Phasaelis, founded by Herod the Great,[7] and Archelais, built by Archelaus his son[8]— towns intended to rival Jericho

[6] *Cf.* Exodus xxiv. Lange, in his *Life of Christ,* vol. iii. p. 403, attracts attention to Lightfoot (Hor Heli on John vii. 31) who quotes from the tract Succah: "There were seventy bullocks, according to the seventy nations of the world. These were offered in sacrifice during the fast of the Tabernacles."

[7] Josephus, *Ant.,* XVI. v. 2. [8] Josephus, *Ant.,* XVII. xiii. 1.

as centres of agricultural and horticultural industries.[9] Palm-groves extended from Phasaelis, near the border of Judea, to those of Jericho, twenty-three miles away. Only for part of a day, the second day from Scythopolis, the road touched the low hills or skirted the gorge of the descending valley, where danger lurked in excess for lonely travellers, the first and last part of the journey being near cultivated lands by a pleasant way of increasing interest and security. Marauders infested the lonely parts of the country on both sides of the river; the most perilous of all being the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Travellers usually carried arms for self-defence. St. Peter wore a sword,[10] and knew how to use it.

During the hot summer months no special call was made to the northern people for worship in Jerusalem, but traders pursued their own interests, moving with leisured pace early in the morning and late in the evening to avoid the noontide heat on their journey from the cities of the Galilean Lake to the Herodean towns in the valley of the Jordan.

There is a general assumption that the people from Galilee, on their way to Jerusalem, travelled by a road on the eastern bank of the river to avoid Samaria. All the evidence available fails to substantiate the assumption. That which is regarded as the most important is derived from the well-known hostility of the inhabitants of the central province. Subordinate to this, but supplementary, are the statements in St. Matt. xix. 1 and St. Mark x. 1. St. Mark, however, appears to indicate two journeys: εἰς τὰ ὅρια τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, *i.e.* "into the coasts of Judea *and* beyond Jordan." It is quite clear, from this statement, that the act of entering Judea preceded the crossing of the river, which would have been impossible if the road to Judea went first over Jordan. The last clause refers to the Perean ministry of Jesus as separate from this journey to the Holy City.

The survival of the highways and byways of the land, the towns and villages still extant, and the ruins of former cities,

[9] *Ibid.*, XVIII. ii. 2. [10] St. John xviii. 10.

furnish us with more dependable information about the routes followed by travellers from one part of the country to another. A Roman road is marked on the Tabula Peutingeriana from Scythopolis to Jericho down the western side of the river that served the traders from the Sea of Galilee for the conveyance of their fish to the cities in the valley. Although many of the roads marked on the Peutinger Tables were probably made in the second century, all Roman roads seem to have followed the old paths that led from one town to another, and especially so when several towns lay in the same direction. The cities and towns in Perea were situated either on the foothills or higher up the mountain region; none, like Scythopolis, Phasaelis, Archaelais, and Jericho, were built on the high ground of the plain by the river. There is no reason for a highway down the eastern bank ever having existed. Roads traversed the country east and west towards the main fords, and tracks led to less important crossings known only to the people dwelling in their vicinity. It was not Samaria that the Galileans desired to avoid, but its hostile people. Travellers escaped from the Samaritans by going down the valley road on the western bank of the Jordan. Fear of reprisals kept in check the provocative instincts even of Samaritans who were in the habit of passing beyond the limits of their own territory; only in the more central part of the country were the people inclined to resent the appearance of Jews. The valley road was a better and more comfortable way than the roads through the highlands, except in summer, and far from Samaritan settlements.

Jesus tarried in Jericho for the return of the "Seventy." Two and two they went, and two and two they returned, bearing the same joyful news, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy Name." [11] The result of this tour having exceeded their expectations, they related their success with joy, and their joy was the joy of their Lord, Who turned to God the Father in thanksgiving and prayer which explained

[11] St. Luke x. 17.

the authority He had given them. He then referred to the beatific vision of the Messianic Kingdom, which He said prophets and kings had desired to see. He appeared to have anticipated greater things, and said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." The disciples had expected little, and, having gained more, were satisfied. Detecting in their exultation the pride of success, Jesus reminded them that a greater cause of joy was the record of their names in the Book of Life.

A surprising feature of the Gospel narratives is the absence of descriptive accounts of the places and people visited by Jesus and His disciples, except those specific instances which were directly concerned with particular phases of His work. Familiarity with the circumstances suggests the reason for their omission from the Gospels by the Evangelists.

We shall never gauge the extraordinary power of the words of Jesus until we realize that the situation in which they were uttered was less important than the effect they produced on the minds of the listeners. We shall, however, appreciate more fully their meaning when it is possible to associate them with the event or locality with which they were connected. Every lesson Jesus taught has not been handed down to us; His daily conversation was not recorded; but some of His sayings left an impression that could never be effaced from the memory. Deeper and deeper sink unforgettable utterances until the things of God become the conspicuous feature of permanent value. There are certain hours when everything is forgotten except the predominant factor which attracted attention. Subservient to it, yet supporting it, from whence proceeded the immediate cause, is an incident and an allusion that may add to the interest of the particular saying.

Before continuing His journey to the Feast of the Tabernacles in Jerusalem, Jesus taught the people wherever a suitable place could be found, and no doubt the synagogue in Jericho offered the most favourable spot; it served also His hearers with an appropriate place for discussion. As He

spoke, a certain lawyer, apparently a man of learning, in a tone of self-conscious superiority, interrupted Jesus with the question: Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Abounding pleasure in the gay city of palm-trees ministered to the enjoyment of the transitory life of the time. What could a man do to secure the joyful possession of life for ever? By observing the law surely permission to enter with satisfaction into the selfish indulgence around him was assured. What more could be required than keeping the law for life to continue throughout the ages? The lawyer evidently desired to test the knowledge of Jesus in the ethical obligations of the law, and fortify his own position. The great Teacher, noticing the ability of the lawyer, skilfully replied with another question, "What is written in the law, how readest thou?" And he, answering, said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." Jesus accepted his reply as theoretically correct, saying: "This do, and thou shalt live." "This do," meant something more than a formal treatment of legal obligations; to love with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his strength, and with all his mind was to live a life of love, and the test of true love is in action.

The clever lawyer became uneasy; he had given his definition, and was told to act up to the standard he had set. He does not seem to have doubted his love of God; what troubled him was his relation to his neighbour, and, willing to justify himself, asked, "Who is my neighbour?" Jesus answered in the Parable of the Good Samaritan,[12] an answer with a lesson for His disciples as well as the lawyer.

A neighbour in the East receives exceptional treatment; his position is defined by custom, which is even stronger than law, and Jewish exclusiveness, cultivated by the desire to strengthen the racial instinct, fulfilled the obligation imposed on every one's relation to another of the same race. This is a notice-

[12] St. Luke x. 30.

able feature of our own time. A Jew can depend on the support of his own community; he can reckon on assistance wherever another Jew is found. And there has been left on the people of his native land an indelible impression of this obligation. A neighbour in Jerusalem has a right to expect help in any emergency. But the neighbour is defined by his creed, and such was the custom when the lawyer asked the important question, and its answer fixed for ever the extent of man's obligation to his fellow-man.

Modern Jerusalem is divided into quarters represented by the religion of its inhabitants. There is the Jewish, the Christian, and the Mohammedan quarter. Each supports its own poor. They are only neighbours according to their religious faith. The Jew is not a neighbour to the Christian, nor is the Mohammedan a neighbour to any one but a Mohammedan. A pious Moslem cannot, without violating a direct command, enter into any relationship that is avoidable with a Jew or a Christian.[13] He is forbidden in a positive manner to contract any friendship with unbelievers. And if a Jew were found at Easter-time in a Christian street in Jerusalem, a fanatical Christian would express his indignation in a forcible and unpleasant manner. The Jew is not less disagreeable in his attitude to those who differ from him. But in their respective quarters neighbourliness is carried to an incredible extent. Amongst the Moslems a neighbour has the first refusal of any article offered for sale, and it is not a trespass to demand the use of anything belonging to the man that lives next door.

The universal obligation of service rests on a firmer basis than a creed; it deals with the principle of God's love for man, which is exhibited in the realm of nature by an appropriate supply of food according to the measure of his requirements. But this depends on his effort to make a proper use of it. A similar effort is equally necessary for the proper treatment of his fellow-man. In order that the will of God should pre-

[13] Sura v., The Table. Dent's edition of the Koran, p. 492.

vail in the sphere of man's conduct as it is seen in the kingdom of nature, Christ came to show its universal application. He recognized man's need of a right understanding, his need of right dealing, which systems confine within the sphere of their own operations, and often prevent the use which God intended man to make of His provision for mankind.

The parable of the Good Samaritan is God's direction through Christ His Son to all men of all systems and all creeds, who arrogate to themselves the exclusive right of determining the kind of treatment that is necessary for mankind. Christ is greater than a system, His love is richer than the law. No ecclesiastical system controlled even by spiritual men is capable of embracing the whole of the love of God. At its best it is only partial, and cannot do more than show the way to obtain a better knowledge of the unsearchable riches of God's ceaseless care, a more intimate acquaintance with His love. The parable contains the principle which Jesus came to teach all men, the principle He expressed in His life and in His death, that the man who loves God loves also his fellowman. Religious thought has passed through many revolutions in the history of mankind, but nothing ever exhibited so clearly this principle, which none but God could have enunciated for the basis of man's duty.

Jesus said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves,[14] who stripped[15] him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." The lawyer would immediately recognize an incident true to life, one he knew had actually happened. There never was a time in the history of the country when the wild region between Jerusalem and Jericho was free from robbers. Caves in the hills shelter them; inaccessible rocks and deep ravines help them to escape from punishment. Even now travellers are in such danger that the safety of Europeans depends on an escort sanctioned by the authorities. The danger attached

[14] Robbers.

[15] They stripped him first to save his garments from being spoilt.

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

But Martha was cumbered about much serving

Luke X: 40

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her

John VIII: 7

to a journey to the city of the plain was not more than the peril of the soul in the city. The lawyer could not have been unaware of Lot's choice and the ruin of his family. But the historic incident may not have occurred to him, although he knew well the reputation of Jericho in the land of Israel.

What chastened the lawyer was the picture of the men our Lord introduced into the parable. First, He said a priest journeying from the Holy City saw the injured man and passed by on the other side. Probably fear of defilement through touching the body when it might be dead would cause him to ignore the need for help. Next came a Levite, who gazed on the sufferer, then turned away.

The priest represented the Ecclesiastical System, a system which was merely an instrument, and failed because it lacked the personal touch. It was good for the purpose of education and direction, and was intended to sensitize the moral faculty until it became capable of receiving a higher revelation for raising social right to the level of spiritual principle. Without that revelation, which would elevate the individual into a being possessed of the power of living the life in God, of loving His will and acting for Him, the system was no use to any one outside its own borders.

The Levite represented the Law, a constraining influence, a moral force, which condemns and fixes a penalty, but can neither feel nor save. It makes a man conscious of wrongdoing, but it does not assist him in doing right.

The priest and the Levite were not condemned as men; it was the organized form each represented: the law of which the Jew was so proud, and the exclusive character of the religion of his fathers. Our Lord selected the Samaritan to represent the spirit of true religion in order to strengthen His rebuke of the priest and Levite for their failure to exhibit the true spirit of religion in the forms they used. And in His choice of the alien Jesus directed the attention of His hearers to the revolution necessary to understand the practice of the right conduct of man to man.

He said: "A certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him." [16] This would mean a revolution in their minds, a revolution which carried with it a corresponding revelation, and as Jesus described the treatment of the helpless man by the stranger, it was a revelation so profound that even the self-satisfied lawyer saw that his question ought to be reversed, and, instead of asking Who is my neighbour? it should be, To whom am I neighbour? Man has a claim by virtue of his being a creature of need on the Great Creator. It is the tremendous need of fallen man that Jesus the Divine Son came to supply, and in Him we have God's supreme revelation of His love for mankind.

From Jericho Jesus ascended the mountain road on His way to Jerusalem. The Twelve who went with Him, and the other disciples as they passed through the wilderness of bare hills, would not fail to be impressed by the parable. Every step they took reminded them of the dangers to which travellers were exposed in the wild waste land around them and the deep and dark ravine beneath their feet, the lurking places of evil men from whence they rushed on the lonely wayfarer. The inn on the side of the road and the men they met added to the vividness of the sublime story.

On reaching Bethany Jesus parted from the company of His followers. They continued their journey to the Feast, and He entered the home of His friends. His unexpected arrival at the house of Martha and Mary caused quite a scene of excitement. Preparations had been made for the reception of guests at the festival season by the erection of a booth in the courtyard of every dwelling, and Martha, wishing to entertain Jesus in a manner suitable to her feeling of regard for Him, bustled about the place to bring forth the choicest food, while her sister Mary eagerly sought to learn more of His wonderful way of life. She sat at His feet and heard His word. Martha was at the first so busy that her sister was forgotten.

[16] St. Luke x. 33.

When she noticed Mary unmoved by the necessity for attendance, her impatience at her inattention to the household duties burst its restraint, and in her distraction she appealed to Jesus. With a gentle remonstrance He answered, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things." She had been anxious to serve the choicest food in many dishes according to the festival custom, but one thing was needful, and in His accustomed manner Jesus turned the occasion into an opportunity for a lesson by using the earthly food to indicate the heavenly. Sitting in the booth, the memorial of Israel's desert pilgrimage, in the courtyard of the house, He referred to Mary's choice as the "good portion," [17] the inward, distinguished from the outward, form of food, the hidden manna which by faith feeds the soul and which can never be taken away.

[17] St. Luke x. 42: ἀγαθὴ μερίς = good portion. The word for portion is the same used in the parable of the Prodigal Son, who asked for his portion.

CHAPTER XXX

JESUS AT THE FEAST OF THE TABERNACLES

THE Feast of the Tabernacles was the Harvest Festival of the Children of Israel, and the third of the great festivals on which all adult Jews were required to appear in the Temple at Jerusalem. Its celebration began on the 15th of Tishri, usually corresponding to the early part of October, and lasted seven days. During the festival all people dwelt in booths, structures composed of the branches of trees,[1] specially built for the occasion on the housetops and in the courtyards, as a remembrance of the journey of their forefathers through the wilderness, where God provided for their needs. Pilgrims came very readily to this Feast, multitudes gathered from distant lands to celebrate the great ingathering of the fruits of the earth, and the streets of Jerusalem were filled with joyous crowds in picturesque costumes. Strangers erected their temporary dwelling-places on the slopes of Olivet. From its summit the Holy City appeared to be embowered in foliage, and a traveller, on passing through one of the gates, found himself in the midst of a scene af gaiety which he had never before encountered. Processions passed frequently, in which palm-branches, myrtles, and citrons figured conspicuously, and the cheerful aspect of the people exhibited the most favourable characteristics of their race. The religious part of the celebration also attracted large numbers. In addition to the usual services, there were two prominent acts of a spectacular nature which Jesus subsequently used as significant illustrations of the lessons He desired to convey to the people. At the morning sacrifice a priest drew water from the fountain in the Siloam village, entered with it by the Water Gate, and

[1] Lev. xxiii. 33, 34; Neh. viii. 14, 15.

poured it out from a golden vessel at the foot of the altar.[2] Every evening of the feast-days the sanctuary was so brilliantly illuminated by means of torches in the court of the women, and light from the great candelabra, that the glare lit up the whole city.[3]

Each visit Jesus paid to Jerusalem marked a distinct step in the manifestation of His Messianic purpose. On the first occasion He suddenly appeared in the Temple and cleansed the courts of His Father's House,[4] thus signifying the need of the preparation for His reception which coincided with the proclamation of John the Baptist. During his next visit, when He healed the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda,[5] He continued the process He had begun by His appeal to the Jews for their acceptance of His claim to be equal with God. A crisis was then reached through the refusal of the rulers to accept Him as the Messiah, and He turned to Galilee, where He ordained Twelve Apostles to be trained for universal service.

When the Feast of the Tabernacles began Jesus had not arrived in Jerusalem. His absence was noticed and provoked discussion. This alone showed that He had attained a national reputation. Enquiries were made for Him, and both His character and mission became the topic of conversation, but through fear of the rulers no one dare commit himself to more than a vague statement of his views. It was generally admitted that Jesus was a good man, though some demurred, saying, " Nay, He deceiveth the people." [6] The hostility of the hierarchy had increased to such an extent since His last visit, when they sought to kill Him, that it was known amongst some of the people to have now reached a definite and determined place in their minds, and all that the rulers required was a suitable opportunity for getting rid of Jesus. Suddenly He appeared in the midst of the Feast and was found, to the astonishment of those who saw Him, sitting in one of the outer

2 Mishna, Succa iv. 3 Succa v. 2, 9. 4 St. John ii. 16.
5 St. John v. 8. 6 St. John vii. 12.

courts of the Temple teaching the people. A still greater surprise was in store for them in the development of His work. The character of His teaching changed. A more universal note was struck; His appeal became more catholic. His claim exceeded the limits of Jewish expectation; it passed beyond the narrow confines of a Hebrew Messiahship. He addressed the world.[7]

Those who listened to Him in the Temple Court were astonished at His learning[8] because He belonged to no Rabbinical school, and they could not imagine such wisdom proceeding from One who had no claim to Rabbinical authority. He said, "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will he shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." He taught only what He Himself possessed in the conscious union with the Father as the only real thing in life. Unlike the learning of the Rabbis, His great knowledge had neither come to Him through intellectual speculation, nor through any communication from without, but through His inner consciousness of the Father's will, which He manifested in His conduct. Doing God's will was not at all marvellous to Him, but perfectly natural. In one sense the rulers knew the will of God, and in this lay the secret of their unbelief. They knew the law, but failed to carry out its precepts in their daily life, and this neglect of duty rendered them incapable of perceiving the truth which He revealed. If they had acted on what they already knew, their vision would have become clearer, and they would have entered into a fuller realization of the will of the Father by its operation in their conduct. He said: "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill Me."[9] Some of the people standing by, probably strangers and ignorant of the intentions of the rulers, answered, "Thou hast a devil; who is going about to kill Thee."[10] Others, seeing the crowd of people gathered round

[7] St. John viii. 26.
[8] St. John vii. 15.
[9] St. John vii. 19.
[10] St. John vii. 20.

and observing Jesus as the centre of attraction, and aware of the determination of the rulers, wondered why it had not been put into execution; they exclaimed, "Is not this He Whom they are seeking to kill," [11] thus suggesting that perhaps the rulers had recognized Jesus as the Messiah, and therefore let Him alone; but others answered, "No, we know this Man whence He is; but when Christ cometh no man knoweth whence He is." [12] "Then cried Jesus: 'Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, Whom ye know not.'" Stirred by His allusion to their ignorance of God and their knowledge of His own claim to have come from God, some of them sought to take Him by force, but were held in check by the popular feeling in His favour; others, moved by His words and the knowledge they possessed of His works, considered His claim to be verified, and believed on Him, saying, "When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this Man hath done?" [13]

The rulers watched with angry feelings the state of popular opinion, and consulted together in order to ascertain what might be done under the circumstances. They even sent officers to arrest Jesus, but no favourable opportunity was found; the people were too well disposed towards Him, and, fearing to provoke a tumult, the rulers restrained their hatred until the Feast was over. Jesus knew their feelings. He was also aware of their determination, yet He stood in the Temple court without fear and addressed the people. He warned them that the time of His mission was brief, that soon He would pass away from them where they could not follow Him, and appealed to the waverers to decide at once what they would do; but their minds were so engrossed with things present that they thought He meant to depart and reside amongst another people, and they questioned one another whether He would go to the dispersed among the Gentiles and teach them.

On the last, the great day of the Feast, Jesus stood again

[11] St. John vii. 25. [12] St. John vii. 27, 28. [13] St. John vii. 31.

in the Temple court when the water libation peculiar to the Feast was offered. He cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." [14] When the people heard this they marvelled, and some said, "Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of Him." [15]

An opportunity at last arrived in the division among the people for the enemies of Jesus, which they eagerly sought to use. They sent men to seize Him, but His words so impressed the officers who had been ordered to effect His arrest that they returned to the rulers without Him, and when asked why they had not brought Jesus the officers answered, "Never man spake like this Man." The Pharisees, incensed by their defeat, angrily asked them if they were also deceived, and said, "Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed on Him? As for the multitude, they are ignorant and accursed." One voice was raised in protest; one man spoke for Jesus: [16] Nicodemus, the ruler who went to Jesus by night. The memory of that interview had touched the spring of justice in them. Timidly he said, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?" His protest heralded the dawn of a new life, the life for which he craved, and which he sought in the darkness, soon to be dispelled by the light of everlasting day.

After a night spent on the Mount of Olives, probably in one of the booths erected for the Feast not yet dismantled, Jesus returned in the morning to the Temple, where He sat and taught the people that came to Him. While engaged in

[14] St. John vii. 37, 38. *Cf.* Peter's confession at the source of the Jordan, p. 264, and our Lord's conversation with the woman of Samaria.

[15] St. John vii. 40–44. [16] St. John vii. 50, 51.

this congenial occupation He was interrupted by a number of Scribes and Pharisees, who brought to Him a poor sinful woman. Having set her "in the midst," they said to Jesus, "Master, this woman was taken in adultery. Now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned; but what sayest Thou?" [17] They had not brought the accused solely out of regard for the law, nor as advocates of purity, although their feeling against the woman was no doubt sincere. Anxious to accomplish the downfall of Jesus, they were prepared to adopt any means for carrying out their plan, and this appeared to answer their purpose. They reckoned on His testimony for His destruction. His tenderness towards sinners might induce Him to acquit her, and thus place Himself in violent antagonism to the law. Should He condemn her according to the law, the sympathy and support of the multitude might vanish, and the rulers could then more easily dispose of Him. Their indignation scarcely veiled the malevolent glee within them. To Jesus the horror of the whole scene was distressing. He turned His head from the miserable and tortured woman, the brutal hypocrites behind her, and the gaping crowd at the back, stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. His apparent indifference was in reality a significant act: it showed that He had no intention of dealing with the situation from their point of view. He was not indifferent, nor did he ignore the question of the accusing rulers. They relied on the law of Moses written on stone; He came to write the law in the hearts of men, and show them that only the Judge of all the earth can judge righteously; that men who have avoided one sin and committed another are incapable of exercising judgment.

Incensed at His proceedings, the Scribes and Pharisees continued asking for the judgment they had themselves settled. At length He stood erect, and, looking at them, said, "He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at

[17] In Lev. xx. 10 the manner of carrying out the penalty is not stated. Lightfoot gives, as the Rabinnical interpretation, stoning for a damsel betrothed but not married, and strangling for a married woman.

her." [18] His answer, wholly unexpected, shifted the scene, and turned the light of truth on the accusers. One by one, in silent shame, they passed through the crowd, each with his accusing conscience, utterly defeated.

Again Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground, and once more stood upright, and looked on the woman. She might have gone also; none was there to witness against her. But she waited, a solitary woman, a guilty sinner, ashamed and awed by her situation, strangely bound to the spot. And when her accusers, themselves condemned, had departed, she allowed her case to remain where they had lodged it, in the supreme court of appeal. Conscience is a provision of mercy as well as of misery. By waiting she signified her desire that Jesus should deal with her, and thus gave evidence of her trust in His mercy. The verdict was not long delayed. Jesus said, "Woman, where are thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" She said, "No man, Lord." He said, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." [19] His words primarily referred to the civil penalty of death, which he had been asked to confirm. While there was in the admonition "Sin no more" an emphatic reproof of her sin, there was in the words "Neither do I condemn thee," substantial evidence of Divine absolution. The woman who was brought to Jesus as a Judge found in Him a Saviour.

Jesus went on with His teaching. He said: "I am the Light of the World: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." [20] The significance of His words became more apparent after His encounter with the Scribes and Pharisees and the sinful woman. They also constitute His claim to the Jewish title of Messiah,[21] and were illustrated by the brilliant display of light on the last day of the Feast, when the city shone in the glare of the torches and candelabra in the Temple Courts. The Pharisees in the company before Him interrupted His great declaration on the

[18] St. John viii. 7. [19] St. John viii. 11. [20] St. John viii. 12.
[21] Dan. ii. 22 has been regarded as typifying the Messiah.

ground that a man's own testimony regarding himself is insufficient, and must be supported by the evidence of another person. He replied: "Ye judge after the flesh: I judge no man, and yet if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me." [22]

"I am one that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me." [23] So utterly materialized were their conceptions of true life, the Pharisees, apparently incompetent to perceive the spiritual light it shed on their bewildered minds, asked, "Where is Thy Father?" He answered, "Ye neither know Me nor My Father: if ye had known Me ye should have known My Father also." Then He said, "I go my way, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins; whither I go, ye cannot come." The suspicions of the Pharisees that Jesus was an abnormal product of their time, animated by a spirit of antagonism to their rule of life, they believed were now confirmed. Having failed to act as an ordinary Jew, He intended to finish His extraordinary career in disgust of life and die by His own hand.

"Then said the Jews, Will He kill Himself? because He said whither I go ye cannot come." [24] To them His departure to a place where they could not find Him, and could not follow Him, had only this sinister meaning. They believed that "the souls of those whose hands have acted madly against themselves are received by the darkest places in Hades," [25] while "those who depart out of this life, according to the law of nature, and pay that debt which was received from God, enjoy eternal fame."

The infinite patience of Jesus in teaching these dull-witted men, whose coarse minds and hard hearts turned His wonderful words into vulgar ideas, can only be measured by His infinite love. He was so far removed in thought from the men before Him that their world contained no place for His life, and His eternal home was no place for them. All that their

[22] St. John viii. 15, 16. [23] St. John viii. 18. [24] St. John viii. 22.
[25] Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Book III. chap. viii. 5.

religion might have done to interpret His words had disappeared from them. Nothing but its skeleton remained, the framework of that life, through which God revealed Himself to their forefathers. The blood and smoke of sacrifices, the steam of incense, observation of days, distinction of meats, and corporeal purifications had so clogged their minds that the spirituality of worship lay veiled under this thick cloud, and the people could not see what God intended them to behold. The sacrifices were to direct them to the justice of God in the punishment of sin, and the mercy of God in substituting them in their stead as types of the Redeemer, and the ransom by His blood. The supreme sacrifice was still to be offered in the great consummation of the death of Jesus. There rose before Him the gaunt figure of the cross, its beams of wood outstretched for His hands, His body pierced, and His blood outpoured. He said: "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself, but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things." [26]

His teaching had not been altogether unprofitable. As He spake these words many believed on Him — that is, on what He had said. He exhorted them to continue in their belief so that they might become His disciples indeed, to know the truth for the truth to make them free. This allusion to freedom touched their pride, and some resented the inference. Jesus then explained the meaning of His words as referring to the bondage of sin, that those who committed sin were the servants of sin, and only the sons of God were free. They relied on their exalted position as children of Abraham. He claimed a wider origin than Abraham, that He came from the universal Father of all mankind. It was this claim which roused their indignation, and His assertion that the privileges on which they relied belonged to all people, and were not to remain always with them, although they came first to them. This statement appeared to them in a political aspect; it expressed the revo-

[26] St. John viii. 28.

lution that Jesus brought into the world, it touched the secret of the future of their race and hurt their vanity. They knew very well, though they did not understand exactly, what was meant by Christ's descent from the Father, that it implied an extension of the Kingdom of heaven in which others would share, for God was the Father of all men. And when Jesus said that Abraham had seen the universal application of His Kingdom they burst into fury and took up stones to cast at Him; and, as at Nazareth, He passed through them unhurt.[27]

[27] St. John viii. 59.

CHAPTER XXXI

SHEPHERDS — FALSE AND TRUE

Beggars sat at the doors of rich men's houses;[1] they pursued their calling at the Temple Gates.[2] Wherever an opportunity for soliciting aid was likely to be found the mendicant appeared. The poor were always with the people.[3] Shadows of affliction fell continually across the gaiety of life, tears mingled with its laughter, and sorrow associated with its joy. The coming of the Messiah they expected never meant to the nation the elimination of all forms of distress. Their program of future glory contained no scheme for the banishment of social evils. Nor did Jesus sweep away all abuses, and by a mighty effort remove the tears from off all faces. Here a little and there a little, He showed how life might be transformed. He offered to men something new for them to enter into a better life: an inward state of being capable of sustaining all outward cares. Some of the people accepted His offer; others exhibited no desire to change.

When Jesus went in and out of the precincts of the Holy House the need of an afflicted man arrested His attention. He saw a poor blind beggar sitting at the Temple Gate, waiting patiently near the court where the light had shot its beams on the festival night. The surging crowd passed him to walk on the marble pavement of the Temple court in the glory of its illumination; and he sat with sightless eyes in the darkness. Jesus saw him and gazed in pity on him. The Light of the World shed His beams on the beggar's night. Accustomed to the importunities of mendicants, the disciples noticed their Lord's compassion, and, seeing in the case before them one of the perplexities of human life, asked their Master for a solution of the difficult problem of Jewish theology

[1] St. Luke xvi. 20. [2] Acts iii. 2. [3] St. John xii. 8.

respecting the cause of suffering. "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" [4]

This misconception of the judgment of God has been the question of the ages; it arose chiefly from the knowledge of heredity, in the visitation of the sins of the fathers on the children. Some afflictions are the direct consequence of personal wickedness; others follow from a course of parental sin. There are disabilities which cannot be attributed either to a man's transgression or his father's wrong-doing; they deal rather with the discipline of life; sometimes assuming a vicarious direction, they are instrumental in mellowing the tempers and softening the hearts of relations and friends.

Jesus dealt summarily with the speculative question of His disciples by informing them that the blindness of the man in front of them was due neither to his own nor his parents' sin, but that the work of God might become manifest in him. This was the purpose of Jesus, and He immediately began to restore the poor man's sight. The means He employed followed the usual symbolical character of the actions of Eastern men. Without some form there seemed to be no expectation. Naaman, the Syrian, expressed his disappointment with the simple words of the Prophet, who had sent a message by his servant for him to wash in the Jordan. "I thought," he said, "He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the Lord God, and strike His hand over the place and recover the leper." [5]

There was no virtue in the process of healing adopted by Jesus when He spat on the ground, "made clay" (mixed His saliva with the dust), anointed the eyes of the blind man, then told him to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam.[6] The character of the miracle, as well as the means employed, were symbolical, even the man himself was a symbol, that the works of God should be made manifest in him; to show that on the darkness of the past the true Light had shined, that the eyes of the blind might be opened.

[4] St. John ix. 2. [5] 2 Kings v. 11. [6] St. John ix. 6, 7.

The man obeyed the direction of Jesus, and by doing His will he recovered his sight; he knew then that a change had taken place, the darkness of the night had passed, and the day of light had dawned for him. On his way back, doubtless to seek his Benefactor, he called at his home and told his parents. The neighbours, too, heard the wonderful news and were all amazed. They could not believe that he was the beggar they knew so well, and actually disagreed among themselves whether he was the man with whom they were acquainted, or another like him. He settled their dispute by his own admission, "I am he." They naturally inquired about his recovery, and he gladly told them how it had happened, how "A Man that is called Jesus" had restored his sight. Instead of sharing his joy, when they heard that the deed had been wrought on the Sabbath Day, they asked him where the Restorer of his sight might be found, and took the man to the Pharisees to lodge a complaint against Jesus for having healed him on the Sabbath Day.

The rulers had set forth a proclamation of their intention to punish any one associated with Jesus; they were determined to uphold their authority for maintaining the law, and the man, having submitted to the treatment of Jesus, was guilty as His accomplice of breaking the law of the Sabbath.

The Pharisees questioned him, and some of them declared Jesus could not be Divine because He kept not the Sabbath; others said, "How can a Man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them"; [7] but the man replied, "He is a Prophet." Evidently the rulers were in a dilemma, and how to escape from it they did not know. One way at last appeared: perhaps, after all, the man had not been blind. They would send for his parents and ask them. Unwilling to be drawn into the controversy, through fear of punishment, they said their son was of age and could answer for himself. And when questioned again the man stoutly held to his conviction that once he was blind and now he could see.

[7] St. John ix. 16.

Instead of shaking his faith in the Worker of the miracle, their angry comments on his Benefactor provoked a rejoinder, and he scornfully told them, with a sarcastic reminder that God heareth not sinners, if this Man Who had restored his sight were not of God He could do nothing. His audacity increased their anger, and they excommunicated him.[8] He became a social as well as a theological outcast; no one dare speak to him, nobody would give him employment, and none might receive him as a guest. The curse that had fallen on him would rest on all who befriended him. Jesus heard they had cast him out, and He sought and found him. The things He took the most trouble about were the lost things; He came to seek and to save the lost. The tenderness of Jesus, His love for the outcast and forlorn, has often caused men to forget, in view of this attitude of the Saviour towards all in need, another side of His character. His great love obscures His great courage. Jesus knew the rulers designed to take Him, but He fearlessly sought the man on whom they had placed their miserable ban of excommunication, and when He had found him He proceeded with the work already begun in him, saying, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The man answered, "Who is He, that I may believe on Him?" And Jesus said, "Not only hast thou seen Him, but it is He that is talking with thee."[9] The Light of Life illumined his soul, and the Spring of Living Water burst forth in the expression of his faith in Jesus. When he saw his Lord he worshipped Him.

There were Pharisees with Jesus who had apparently not decided against Him, doubtful about His claim, but unconvinced, whom He addressed in words that conveyed to them the truth about seeing. He said for judgment He had come into the world, that they which had not seen might see, and those who saw and would not believe might remain in their spiritual blindness. The physical blindness of the beggar was a misfortune, the moral blindness of the Pharisees was a crime,

[8] St. John ix. 34. [9] St. John ix. 35, 36, 37.

because they were wilfully blind to the higher revelation of God in Christ. Jesus said unto them, "If ye were blind ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see: therefore your sin remaineth." [10]

He then addressed to them the beautiful allegories of the Fold and the Good Shepherd, to rebuke them for their treatment of the man whose sight had been restored, to comfort him, and at the same time instruct His disciples in the duties which would inevitably fall to them in the future. The beggar, having been expelled from the fold of Judaism, was received into the flock of the True Shepherd.

An "ideal" or good shepherd [11] is beautifully illustrated by the picture of the shepherd's life and work. Its familiarity became more impressive in the adaptation Jesus made of it for His lessons. Those who heard His words would attribute to them the highest significance. The sheep country in Judea is the mountainous region, where every village is built at the top or side of a hill. The gardens immediately surround the village, the corn-fields encircle the gardens, and the pasture lands lie beyond the cultivated fields. The pastures being farthest from the village, a knowledge of their situation is essential for a correct appreciation of the relation between the shepherd and the sheep.

A shepherd begins his career as a boy watching the sheep and goats on the hillocks near his home, or in the company of his father in the fields. When he is old enough to take the sheep to the scanty pastures they have already learnt to recognize his voice. A shepherd first calls, he calls to lead, he leads to feed, and he feeds to keep. The shepherd calls,[12] and at

[10] St. John ix. 41.

[11] ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός, "the good shepherd"; *i.e.* the perfect or ideal shepherd (St. John x. 2).

[12] The shepherd's call. I remember once meeting with five shepherds watering their flocks at the Springs of Moses under Mount Nebo, and when their work was done watching them extricate their respective sheep from the great flock in which they were scattered. First one shepherd called "Tahoo"; his sheep lifted their heads, wriggled out of the flock in the direction of his voice, and followed his retreating figure up the hill. Then

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroiannt*

And the sheep follow him: for they know his voice

John X: 4

Edit. A. Noyer, Paris *Sc. D. Mastroianni*

Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight

Luke XV: 21

his call the sheep follow him. He leads them down the hill, past the gardens, by the corn-fields, up the hill beyond to the pastures. There are always some sheep walking in his steps, close behind him; and others farther away. Those farthest from him are most easily tempted to stray. The rough, coarse grass of the wayside entices them, or the toil of the steep path enfeebles them. It is always in the following that sheep are lost. Attracted by their surroundings, they fail to notice the movements of the shepherd, and when they follow afar off they are in danger of losing the way, of missing the track, and many a wandering sheep has fallen down a steep ravine and been lost. Having reached the pasture lands, the shepherd stands before his sheep and watches them feed. If one wanders too far away a well-directed stone shot from the shepherd's sling, just to miss the head, startles and turns the sheep back again. Some sheep have to be startled before they are turned. During the feeding the shepherd may notice if a sheep is missing; he can leave the rest in the wilderness, where there is often a common fold for all sheep to form one flock from all quarters, and there his sheep abide in safety while the shepherd seeks the sheep that is lost.

When the sheep have been fed the shepherd leads them home to the village fold. Again they follow. On his arrival at the door he opens wide its portal and they pass inside. One or more of his sheep may be ailing or wounded by thorn and scrub; if the shepherd cannot attend to them in the fields he remembers their need of his attention at the fold. He places his rod across the door. At first the sheep hesitate to pass beneath because of the obstruction; he gently raises it to cast away their fear, and one by one they pass under the rod, and he watches carefully for the sheep that needs his special care. When it appears the rod falls, he catches the sheep by the leg, the poor thing struggles until it submits to the shepherd's will to heal its wound or attend to its sickness.

the next called, and the next, until five shepherds were walking in different directions, each followed by his own sheep.— AUTHOR.

There is no picture of Eastern life which so clearly indicates the love and care of Christ as that of the ideal shepherd; there is no situation so plain that marks the conduct of the sheep. The Ideal Shepherd calls, He leads, He feeds, He keeps, always in this order; it is never altered or reversed. The call comes first, and those who have become accustomed to the voice of the Good Shepherd in their daily life will hear it in the time of trial [13] and temptation, and even at the mouth of the tomb.[14]

Jesus said also that He represented the door of the sheepfold, the way by which men enter into the Kingdom of God. Through Him they gain a life of freedom. He told them that He came to give this larger life, life in its abounding joy and richer knowledge. Before Him passed another picture of Himself as the True Shepherd, differing from the hireling shepherd in the sense of caring even unto death. He saw the necessity for the life laid down. A power in the way of the sheep, which He termed the wolf, had to be faced by consummate courage, as necessary in the world as in the wilderness, to battle with the wild beast. Jesus felt that the Good Shepherd had to be prepared even for death, and He expressed His willingness to die for the sheep. Let the wolf come, He will meet it, by the offering of Himself of His own free will. Then He spoke of other sheep, not of the Jewish fold, which He must bring for all to form one flock [15] under one Shepherd.

"There was a division, therefore, again among the Jews for these sayings." [16]

[13] St. John vi. 20. [14] St. John xx. 16.
[15] St. John x. 16, *μία ποίμνη*, not *μία αὐλή*; one flock, not one fold.
[16] St. John x. 19.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE PEREAN MINISTRY

Jesus had bidden farewell to Galilee when He steadfastly set His face towards Jerusalem to finish His work. Samaria had refused to receive Him on His journey to the Jewish metropolis, and the only way left open for the seventy disciples whom He sent before His face into every city in which He would enter was over Jordan. People from Perea, the province on the east of the river, had visited the scenes of his labours in Galilee and carried reports of His work to their homes. Both Jewish and Gentile inhabitants were acquainted with His power, the mission of the Seventy prepared them for His visit, and the universal note He had struck in His message to Jerusalem at the Feast of the Tabernacles seemed a fitting prelude to His Mission.

Down the Jericho road Jesus passed again to the ford across the Jordan, by which He entered the plain on the other side of the river. Along its level ground He walked to the valley leading to the top of the plateau of the east, and the first city in southern Perea, for His tour through the land, where in the cities of the Decapolis were many Greeks. The "lost sheep" of the House of Israel first attracted his attention, but everywhere He went other "sheep" heard His voice and listened to His word.

His discourses appear more often at this period in the Gospels than a record of His works. Even His words are few when we think of the time He spent in Perea, and the places He visited on His journey through the country. So few are they that all the Evangelists have given us to read might have been spoken in a single day. We can see they are fragmentary, and indicate a more extensive use of the time that Jesus passed

amongst the inhabitants. It is the effect they had on the people and on the disciples rather than their extent that represents their value. This feature makes them appear surprisingly vivid, and so naturally are they related that we wonder why more of the words and works of Jesus have not been recorded. Yet more would perhaps have left less for us of the reality of their significance.

One of the few incidents that are noticed related to His care of a dumb lunatic, which became the occasion of the most bitter controversy of His Perean ministry. With this exception there was less rancour in the opposition of the rulers beyond Jordan than either in Galilee or Judea. It arose chiefly from the impression the miracle created on the people, who were not so familiar with the signs of His power. "And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered." [1] In a spirit of antagonism the rulers present accused Jesus of casting out devils through the chief of the devils. It seemed the only way of discrediting Him before the people who saw His power, but a more unfortunate accusation they could not have made. He answered first by reminding them of the natural consequence of disunion in illustrations they could not ignore — the kingdom, the city, and the house divided; if Satan expelled Satan, he was divided against himself. Then, referring to the practice of Jewish exorcists who claimed to be able to cast out demons, Jesus said, "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges." [2] They were finally discomfited by the statement that if He proved to be the victorious antagonist of the devil it was by the Spirit of God, therefore the Kingdom of God had appeared, and their acknowledgment of His triumph should have been accompanied by their acceptance of the power He displayed as a proof that the Spirit within Him was the sign of His Divine origin. He brought a counter-charge against them for their failure, and told them that they had committed the unpardonable sin of

[1] St. Luke xi. 14. [2] St. Luke xi. 19.

blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of God.[3] They had seen His power, they knew the miracle had been performed by Him, yet they hardened their hearts and said it was the work of the devil. They might be forgiven for speaking against the Son of Man and ignorantly rejecting Him, but to call good evil, when their consciences directed their thoughts to speak the truth, was a sin which could not be pardoned.

Evidently chagrined at the turn of affairs, and put to shame, certain Scribes and Pharisees changed the subject by making a request for a sign from heaven,[4] an excuse for themselves and an attempt to justify their lack of apprehension. They had no desire to be convinced of His Divine claim for their recognition, and they had not the grace to acknowledge their error. They simply resorted to another method of covering their real motive of opposition in a vain and subtle attempt to extort from Jesus a sign, because they were unwilling to accept defeat. The spirit in which they asked for the sign exposed their mean disposition; if their request had been made in good faith nothing more could be done to satisfy their wishes than they had already seen. They were told that a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, but no sign would be given except that of the prophet Jonah, whose preaching brought the people of Nineveh to repentance, and a greater than Jonah was before them; that the men of Nineveh would rise up in judgment against them for their unbelief; and that the Queen of Sheba would also condemn them because she came from the uttermost part of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and they had an opportunity of hearing a greater than Solomon.[5]

While the thoughts of His hearers still lingered on the subject of the dispute,[6] Jesus, with the graphic touch of a skilled Teacher, depicted a moral tragedy. He described the soul of a man as a house from whence an evil spirit had been cast, and then the inside was cleansed and the outside decorated.

[3] St. Matt. xii. 31.
[4] St. Matt. xii. 38.
[5] St. Matt. xii. 39–42.
[6] St. Luke xi. 24.

The moral disorder of the past had gone; all that was wrong had been expelled. But the momentary triumph gained was not enough; there remained still the peril of the empty soul. Had the vacant dwelling been occupied by a worthier tenant, a good spirit, the evil one that had been cast out would have been utterly defeated. He returned to see, and found the soul "to let," so he went and brought other spirits with him and entered into his old home, and the last state of that man was worse than the first.

A woman in the company,[7] admiring the teaching of Jesus, called for a blessing on His mother. The tribute of esteem formed a pleasant interlude in the storm of disputation, and elicited from Jesus a still higher benediction on those who read the Word of God and keep it.

Following these exciting incidents another yet more painful and distressing occurred. As if to allay the bitterness of the contention with the parties at variance a Pharisee invited Jesus to his house.[8] On entering the guest-chamber He found Himself amongst a number of His enemies. The usual courtesy offered to a guest was forgotten, and Jesus reclined at the meal without the customary washing. No one had offered Him the means, and He made no request. His omission was instantly noticed; looks of surprise and disapproval passed between the other guests. He saw their contemptuous glances, He marked the veiled hostility of their hearts. Utterly regardless of the respect due to an invited guest, they scarcely concealed their malevolence, and the patronizing host seemed as if he had asked Jesus to his house to afford his friends an opportunity of displaying their animosity. They had altogether passed the bounds of decency and it was time their miserable pretensions were exposed.[9] In language unmistakably plain Jesus denounced their contemptible trivialities, the ostentatious character of their tithing, the miserable little acts of service, and the gross neglect of principle; their inordinate vanity and self-esteem, the desire for outward show, and the

[7] St. Luke xi. 27. [8] St. Luke xi. 37. [9] St. Luke xi. 42, 43.

corruption of their inward life. Interrupting the torrent of our Lord's rebuke one of the lawyers present said, "Master, thus saying Thou reproachest us also," [10] as if He had forgotten Himself in His righteous indignation and by a sweeping assertion included all. But the lawyers were equally guilty. Their overbearing manner towards the poor, their arrogant display of authority, their pride of office and ignorance of truth, showed that they were partakers of the same spirit, the spirit of opposition to righteousness.

He had been treated by His host in bad faith, the pretence of hospitality was simply an occasion for exhibiting the bitterness of his opponents, and He used it to expose them, to show that He knew the deceitfulness of their nature and their wickedness. Their disguise of friendly intercourse was cast away, and by pressing upon Him in a threatening manner and vehemently questioning Him, they entered on an open conflict determined to put Him down.

He left the Pharisee's house as the crowd gathered to view the unseemly spectacle of a hostile movement in a guest-chamber. All the rabble of the streets collected, and partisans of both sides appeared to join in the contention, actualy [11] treading upon one another to gain a better approach to the scene of strife. Flushed with the excitement of the proceedings, the disciples, who had remained in the outer court with other uninvited supporters of the various guests, emerged from the building with their Master, Who addressed the crowd. First solemnly warning His disciples against the "leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy," [12] He told them that nothing could hide the secrets of the heart. They were not to be afraid of man, as the disturbances they had witnessed might incline them, but rather to fear Him Who could destroy both body and soul; that the Father Who fashioned them loved them and provided for them, and they were to trust Him. Jesus said: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the

[10] St. Luke xi. 45. [11] St. Luke xii. 1. [12] St. Luke xii. 1.

very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." [13]

As these sublime words were uttered an interruption came from a man who had missed altogether their import, whose mind was wholly bent on selfish interest; yet such was his esteem for Jesus that he attributed to Him the power to prevail on his brother for an equal distribution of their inheritance. The man's request clashed with the aim of Jesus, Whose desire for the people to look in faith to God had nothing in common with selfish motives. He said unto him, "Man, who made Me a judge or divider over you?" [14] Interest in wealth and the problems involved in its distribution lay outside the work of Jesus. Human need always touched His heart and brought forth His sympathy and help, but human greed appealed to Him in vain. Addressing the multitude, Jesus warned them against covetousness, the desire of having more. He told them that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." [15] The acquisition of wealth for personal use displays an attitude of mind which, while persisting in its selfish aims, prevents a man from growing into the larger experience of the fellowship of the richer life in God. Jesus illustrated His statement of this profound truth by a parable. He described a farmer whose fields yielded so abundantly that his barns had to be enlarged to hold his wealth, and when at last his storehouses were full the man said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry." [16] But God said, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall these things be, which thou hast provided?"

There was no suggestion of iniquity in his gain, his riches had been obtained by strict application to his temporal affairs. The charge against him was the neglect of a greater obligation, the attention due to the eternal. Absorbed by worldly concerns, he had failed to realize the ultimate fact of life, its

[13] St. Luke xii. 7.
[14] St. Luke xii. 14.
[15] St. Luke xii. 15.
[16] St. Luke xii. 19.

eternal destiny. He had left out of his reckoning death and judgment, because they appeared to him so far away, and, though he became a successful farmer, he was in the main a fool, for having secured the less at the price of the greater. He deemed the precarious enjoyment of a short and merry existence of more value than life eternal, and in God's sight he was a fool. "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God." [17]

Jesus amplified His meaning to the disciples when they were alone together and the multitude had departed. He said unto them, "Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the Kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock: for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." [18]

They had left all for His sake. They were His companions who had elected to share His lot and endure the privations of His earthly pilgrimage. As His little flock, they had heard His voice and were following Him to know more of what He meant to be to them. The Kingdom He gradually revealed, of which He had so often told them, still remained a mystery closely involved with the perplexities of their natural existence. Jesus did not abolish the mystery of the association of the Kingdom with human life. He was so free from the burden of the mystery that He was never restless and baffled with it as mankind. In this singular aspect of His life appears further evidence of His Divinity. Everything was intelligible to Him because He knew the Father's meaning in it all. He enlightened the anxiety of ordinary life with the love of God the Father, to show the Son's disciples there was something higher and better than material objects. God's care for these things signified a greater desire for the welfare of men. Jesus said: "If God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field

[17] St. Luke xii. 21.

[18] St. Luke xii. 29–32.

and tomorrow is cast into the oven;[19] how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Through His great love of the beautiful things in nature He saw in the varied tints of the flowers of the field the clothing of the grass, and in that vision of adornment there appeared God's superintending providence. To the prophet and psalmist all nature quivered with the thought of God. Behind the storm and the flood they saw His hand; and in the heavens His handiwork. But to the prophet and the psalmist God was Jehovah; to Jesus God was Father. He wished His disciples to realize that behind all the processes of nature the love of the Father works for man. All their phenomena appear in a particular order, their sequence can be depended on; because He rules. The thought of the Great Creator, infinite in power, being softened and deepened into that of Father, it became possible to learn how the mystery of fear might depart from the life of the disciples and the mystery of love might enter in. Though men may not always understand they can expect according to their faith. Freedom from anxiety will, therefore, depend on the direction of the mind and the disposition of the heart. Jesus taught the disciples to fix their minds on the Father's will, to turn their hearts from the things of earth, and leave all their interests in the Father's hands, where neither thief approacheth nor moth corrupteth, for He said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."[20] He wanted His disciples to love all that was lovely, to see the love of God in nature, to realize the love of God in His providence, to desire the love of God in their own hearts as the preparation for the continuation of a life of love, that, holding it fast, they might possess it for ever.

Then, in quick transition from things present, He turned their attention to the future, to a more distant future than they had yet considered. Having directed them to the Father, He told them not to cease from the ordinary cares of life

[19] St. Luke xii. 28. The rough grass of the field is used as fuel; it is put within the clay oven and the cakes are laid outside.
[20] St. Luke xii. 34.

because He had seen fit to give them the Kingdom; the Kingdom and the preparation for it were to become their care; that He, their Master, would return, and they were to be in continual readiness to receive Him. In a short parable [21] he revealed to them their duty and their reward. As servants watching for their Lord, whose absence at a wedding, on account of the nature of the feast,[22] indicated delay, they should hold themselves in readiness to open the door at His appearing. In return for their devotion He would attend to their personal comfort. He impressed upon them the necessity for ever being on the watch to guard against all attempts to determine the precise time of His coming, declaring that it was just as uncertain as the moment when a thief would break into the house at night.[23]

Peter interrupted [24] his Lord with a question concerning the application of the parable, whether it referred to the Apostles, who as servants were to watch, or all the disciples. Jesus answered, in effect, that the greater a man's knowledge the greater his guilt if his knowledge be not improved. If a steward, under the impression that his Lord's coming was delayed, should behave unkindly towards his subordinates, and himself unseemly, a just reckoning would be made and punishment inflicted, and the reward for faithfulness would be a higher post of administration.

Then Jesus [25] uttered the wish that the refining fire which He had come to spread might be kindled, but before the purifying and illuminating Spirit could seize human nature and burn out its impurity, His agony must be borne and His work accomplished. These He compared in their intensity to a baptism of suffering, and thus contradicted the prevailing notions that the Messiah would come to work by an outward revolution. His victory would be found in His death. And the nature of His suffering indicated the power of His word in dividing asunder with its purifying flame the members of the

[21] St. Luke xii. 35. [22] See page 389. [23] St. Luke xii. 39.
[24] St. Luke xii. 41. [25] St. Luke xii. 49.

human family. The application of His words to the people He showed by referring to the ordinary portents of the weather with which they were all familiar: the little cloud in the western sky, the precursor of rain; and the sirocco's breath from the desert, the sign of greater summer heat. Common sense declared the necessity for the usual precautions, and also in dealing with the ordinary disagreements of men.[26]

Rumours of a massacre of Galileans [27] in Jerusalem having reached the district, the Pharisees imagined that Jesus would naturally be affected by the account of the sanguinary method adopted by the authorities towards a new movement. Galileans were of a notoriously turbulent character, and the event recorded was not infrequent. It answered, however, the purpose of inquiry, and Jesus was questioned about the cause of the disaster, whether it was not a sign of God's displeasure, according to Jewish ideas of Divine judgment. "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." A similar pronouncement was made in relation to the accidental death of some people in Siloam.

His prophecy was literally fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem. The persistence of the Jews in their desire for a Messiah to restore their land and nation raised false Messiahs,[28] and kept the people in a ferment until hot rebellion against Roman rule brought ruin on their city and disaster to the nation. They rejected the true Messiah because He was not according to their expectation. Their false notions were their undoing; their false pride paved the way for destruction. Jesus, realizing the doom of the people, impressed upon them the necessity for repentance. He added another warning in

[26] St. Luke xii. 58.

[27] St. Luke xiii. 1. Josephus, *Ant.* Book XVIII. chap. iii. 2, where there is also a note from Noldius de Herod, No. 294, relating to St. Luke xxiii. 6, 7. (Whiston's Ed.)

[28] Josephus, *Wars of the Jews,* Book XI. chap. v. 3, 4.

the parable of the Barren Fig-tree, to show them the patience of God and the inevitable result of unfruitfulness.

The parable of the Fig-tree [29] planted in a Vineyard, conveys a very intimate and accurate knowledge of the fruit culture of the land of Israel. Fig-trees and vines often grow together, as they take different substances from the same soil, and may therefore be cultivated in the same plot. In the language of Scripture the vineyard generally stands as a symbol of Israel.[30] The owner of the vineyard is the Lord. While the vineyard signified the nation, the fig-tree in it was the symbol of the individual soul, the tree planted in the garden of the Lord, its place in the Divine order. The One Who interceded for the tree, the dresser of the vineyard, was Jesus Himself. He had pleaded for judgment to be deferred until a further opportunity for imparting new sources of nourishment might produce some fruit. In the delay for the hope of improvement God's forbearance was represented, and the three years of grace indicated the time for growth.

During His ministry in Perea Jesus taught in the synagogues. A more tolerant attitude towards Him is noticeable in the record of His visit to that distant province. The only occasion when trouble occurred on the Sabbath Day relates to a miracle He performed. He had seen a poor bent woman suffering from curvature of the spine, attributed by the people to demoniacal possession, and, calling her to Him, He said, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." [31] And He laid His hands on her; and immediately she was made straight and glorified God.

The ruler of the synagogue indignantly protested against this infringement of their Sabbatical laws. Turning to the people, he told them there were six days in which they could be healed; such work ought not to be done on the Sabbath Day. His complaint differs from the manner in which Jesus had been treated in Judea and Galilee. Persecution followed

[29] St. Luke xiii. 6. [30] Isaiah v. 1. [31] St. Luke xiii. 12.

His acts of healing on the Sabbath in Jerusalem. In Galilee His work on the Sabbath raised a storm of wrath, but no violent attempt to injure Him followed. Although there was a protest in Perea and the same hostile spirit prevailed amongst the rulers, it had evidently been influenced by local feeling. The distance from Jerusalem and the predominance of Gentiles in the cities acted on Jewish prejudice, and cooled the ardour of those who might be disposed to adopt severe measures against Sabbath offenders. When Jesus pointed to the people's care for their animals on the Sabbath and asked if the same regard should not be shown for an afflicted woman, "His adversaries were ashamed; and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him." [32]

The Feast of Dedication

After two months in Perea Jesus returned to Jerusalem to the Feast of Dedication.[33] How solemn the season, how sad the significance, we dare not venture to proclaim. Words can never express all the feelings of the heart of Jesus. We judge chiefly by our own feeble strivings after knowledge. According to calculation by Wieseler, the Feast in that year fell on December 20th and lasted eight days. Jesus therefore kept His birthday, His last birthday, in Jerusalem. It was also the anniversary of His rejection by the rulers.

He walked up and down the eastern porch of the Temple in the midst of the decoration of the rich colonnade apparently alone, gazing wistfully across the Kedron on the slopes of Olivet, and occasionally at the people. Suddenly, as if by arrangement, the rulers of the Jews surrounded Him and impatiently questioned Him, saying, "How long dost Thou make us doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." [34] Perhaps the remembrance of the achievements of the heroes of the past, whose deeds they commemorated at the Feast of Dedication, impelled the rulers towards enquiry in the hope that the greater

[32] St. Luke xiii. 17.
[33] St. John x. 22.
[34] St. John x. 24.

glory in store for their nation might be consummated. In reply, He said He had already told them, but they would not believe. He referred to His works as evidence of Divine origin, then said: "Ye believe not because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life." [35] He declared Himself to be One with the Father,[36] and immediately they attempted to stone Him. There was no mistake about His claim before them. His words reminded them of His address two months before; His reference to His works recalled His claim. But none of these things appealed to the base minds of the rulers. They wanted a temporal King to lead them on to victory over their Roman masters; Jesus came to lead them unto God. He repeated His evidence of the works to prove His Divine origin; they became furious and sought to take Him, but He escaped and went away again beyond Jordan.[37]

[35] St. John x. 26. [36] St. John x. 30. [37] St. John x. 39, 40.

CHAPTER XXXIII

A RETREAT BEYOND JORDAN

Jesus selected Bethabara as the most suitable place for retirement, not through personal fear of the authorities in Jerusalem, but with the intention of continuing His work. The district was sufficiently remote to keep Him out of their reach, and by its position near the upper ford of the Jordan it formed a rallying-place for disciples from various parts of the country; it was also close to the great highway of the east and west. These advantages, however, were only incidental to His purpose. Here John baptized, here he proclaimed the advent of the Kingdom of God, and here Jesus met His first disciples. The Kingdom John announced had begun to appear in the teaching of Jesus, Who came here to continue its unveiling, and in all the parables He taught at this time there is a gradual development of the idea of the Kingdom being in process for completion in a higher life, in a fuller sense of living nearer to God, something beyond the present. Earthly scenes with which the disciples were familiar opened their eyes to behold the vision of its expansion in the life immortal, and showed how inadequate were the resources of earth for the satisfaction of the soul.

The people came to Him in large numbers, and many of them acknowledged that Jesus was greater than John and believed on Him.[1] Wherever He became popular the Pharisees became active, and when their activity was not openly contentious their energies were employed in preparing plans to undermine His authority and destroy His work. They even took a mean advantage of their hospitality to entangle Him in their

[1] St. John x. 41, 42; St. Matt. xix. 1; St. Mark x. 1: *τὰ ὅρια τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου* ("The borders of Judea *and* beyond Jordan").

snares. One of their schemes, devised by a Pharisee of distinction who invited Jesus to "eat bread" on the Sabbath Day,[2] is specially mentioned.

In the courtyard of such an important person all kinds of people gathered during the progress of a meal. Whether by accident or design — probably the latter — a man with the dropsy appeared amongst them, and in so prominent a place he could not be overlooked. The sick man, evidently sincere in his desire to be healed, had been brought by the adherents of the Pharisee knowing what would be likely to happen, and they watched to see what Jesus would do. Their eager looks exposed their thoughts, and He asked them if it were lawful to heal on the Sabbath Day, then cured the man and let him go. Before they could offer a protest, probably on account of their surprise at the successful treatment of a difficult case, Jesus said, "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath Day?"[3]

Having noticed several of the Pharisees striving for the chief seats at the Pharisee's table, Jesus proceeded in the form of a simple parable to admonish them. The sting appeared in the closing words, which referred to their position in God's Kingdom, where they would find their exalted opinions of themselves reduced to their proper dimensions.[4]

A second parable[5] followed the same line of thought, in which Jesus addressed the host, advising him not to invite those who could return his invitation, but to send it to people who had no means of recompense. The Pharisees, in their pride of place, too frequently kept their hospitable intentions confined within the circle of their own class; for the poor and sinful outside their doors they had nothing but contempt. Allusion was more particularly made to their idea of the Kingdom of Heaven as a special preserve of their own, which they expected to enjoy more freely by excluding all who did not

[2] St. Luke xiv. 1.

[3] St. Luke xiv. 5; originally "son or an ox" (*υἱὸς ἢ βοῦς*, and altered to *ὄνος ἢ βους*).

[4] St. Luke xiv. 11.

[5] St. Luke xiv. 12.

belong to the seeming righteous of which they were the chief ornaments. One of the company cried, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God."

This outburst led to the parable of the Great Supper. In the figure of a Feast, the most attractive and alluring form of happiness for Eastern men, Jesus gave them a manifestation of the Kingdom of God. He presented the picture in a two-fold aspect: first in its appeal to the individual; and, second, in its conception of fellowship. The invitation is offered to a number, the acceptance is made by the individual in response to the Divine call. But it does not end there. Just as the natural life cannot be lived completely and perfectly in seclusion and isolation, but requires companionship for its development and expression, so the supernatural life needs fellowship. The Head of the house presides at the Feast, the Giver is the Governor, and all who accept His invitation sit with Him and the other guests. It is the real presence of the Master that maintains the harmony of the Feast; it is His fellowship which makes the heart beat with rapture and the face bright with glee.

The respectable, those who apparently live blameless lives, first receive the invitation, as the most likely to possess a sense of appreciation. And the excuses they give are all taken from things lawful in themselves, yet from the manner in which they are made they become the occasion of the greatest contempt being shown to the Giver of the Feast. Nothing could be more frivolous, Jesus showed them, than for men to regard their ordinary affairs of life, the acquisition of wealth, the cares of business, or domestic duties, as being more important to them than the higher and better qualities of the life that is found in the Kingdom of Heaven. They might easily have deferred these matters to another time, but their minds were set against the feast to which they were bidden, and their hearts turned from the Giver to the petty details of their own fancy. It shows the carnal mind even in the blameless life, and the carnal mind gives everything the preference to God and His salvation.

The Host, naturally indignant, said, "None of these men shall taste of my supper."

Invitations were then sent to others of less repute who had fewer things of their own to consider, to those who, being dissatisfied with their condition, desired something better; "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind."

The warning was perfectly obvious. Those who refused the invitation, rejected the offer, and of their own deliberate choice turned from the highest good, had no reasonable ground of complaint when others accepted and the feast was furnished with guests.

Jesus impressed upon the minds of the people the necessary conditions of fellowship. Even the nearest and dearest ties of earth, He told them, should not interfere with the desire for the Kingdom of God. Everything must be sacrificed for the better life, even a cross — heavier through differences in families and harder because of its being opposed to all that the world offers to man — a cross had to be borne by the disciple. Lest the people surrounding Him saw a contradiction between this hard saying [6] and the parable of the Feast, Jesus spoke two short parables by way of illustration.[7] He had set a high standard, and told the people to count the cost. He would not have them suddenly dragged into His service, nor cause them to be led astray on false pretences by the appearance of an easy entrance into the Kingdom of God. He said, "Count the cost"; He wished to impress them with the depth and difficulty of the better life. It was a feast truly, not something to be gained by calculating and cowardly prudence, but from wise deliberation, as a builder, having secured a good foundation, realizes what it will cost to finish the structure. Effort on effort must be laid for character to rise, by great endeavour and not by comfortable progress. The better life has a cross in it which demands from men, besides the power of endurance, the sense of perspective; though the cross be heavy, and the struggle severe, the prize is glorious. "Count

[6] St. Luke xiv. 26–29. [7] St. Luke xiv. 30–33.

the cost," Jesus said, as if you were a king making war; for life is a warfare too, and the disciple must be a hero, a thinking and reasoning warrior. Thus, what appears as a contradiction is a twofold conception of life; man's response is his own share in it; the feast the gift of life which God bestows.

"Then drew near unto Him all the Publicans and Sinners for to hear Him. And the Pharisees murmured, saying, This man receiveth Publicans and Sinners, and eateth with them." [8]

A more glorious reproach could scarcely have been uttered than the complaint of the Pharisees of the work of Jesus. He answered them in the three parables of the lost, by appealing to the highest and best in man [9] in defence of God's method of redemption. So lofty an ideal transcends the ordinary conception of a man, such love as it represents could only be realized in a Divine Person and exhibited by Himself. There is a suggestiveness and a tenderness in the word "lost"; it means something is missing from its right place, not necessarily something of intrinsic value, but valuable to the loser. It is the Loser Who understands the true meaning of the word, and not the one that is lost. We often speak of lost things in a sense quite different from the interpretation of the word in the Bible. According to the mind of God the lost are not irrecoverable, there is the desire to regain and not the abandonment of despair. In His sight the lost are worth saving. God sees something not wholly depraved, and therefore He wants to make the best of it, to restore it. Jesus, the Divine Son, showed in the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son, that lost things are objects of unquenchable affection. In the first two we see a picture of the seeking love of God. Many sheep were left, but the number did not satisfy the Divine Shepherd. One was lost, not by wilfulness, not by deliberate intention, but in waywardness and in discontent, and His heart followed the wanderer. When it had strayed it was in danger, and might perish if not found. An evil beast, ever on the watch for wandering sheep, might seize it, the mountain

[8] St. Luke xv. 1, 2. [9] St. Luke xv. 4.

wilderness might retain it. God's pity for it, His regard for its danger, is seen in His search. The lost sheep became more valuable in the eyes of the Shepherd than all that remained. Over the rugged hill and down the deep ravine, up the thorny steep and through the desert scrub, He sought the lost, and when He found it carried it home with joy.

The lost coin has a greater relative value than the lost sheep. Ninety-nine out of the hundred still kept together, but only nine out of the ten coins remained.[10] One-tenth of the woman's wealth had disappeared. Whatever may be the interpretation of the woman, her efforts and her coin, this fact appears for us to notice, that it is the missing drachma that she seeks, and, having turned the house upside down, at last she found it and called her friends and neighbours together to share her joy.

The third parable differs from the first two in the kind of object lost. In the former we see no sign of feeling; one is mute and the other lifeless; but in the third, besides the seeking love of God, there are the various movements in the response of the human heart, the rise and progress of true religion in the soul. The son we call prodigal the Father shields under the term "lost." No other word of God describes his deplorable meanness. The brother speaks of him in a harsher way, but we must remember Jesus showed that God has a greater love for lost man than man has for his lost brother.

The younger son had asked for his inheritance, all that he could obtain from his father. He wanted everything but parental rule, and having received all he asked, he became weary of his home, of his father's restraining presence, and went and wasted his substance among exciting pleasure in a world of sin away from home. He discovered at last the unsatisfying nature of worldly happiness; his money spent, abandoned by his friends, he reached the lowest depths of degrada-

10 A plausible explanation of the lost coin has been given in the statement that the coins formed the dowry of the bride and corresponded to the wedding ring; but coins are worn as ornaments by unmarried women. All a woman's wealth is placed in ornaments on her person.

tion. It was not until he realized how deep was his fall below the standard of his true home that he came to himself. This was the first step in a new experience. The next was the most critical, the one on which his future depended. He had to decide whether he would turn from his miserable state or remain in his abject position. Memory awoke within him a father's care. Having made up his mind to leave his sordid occupation, the next step is seen in the direction of his gaze. He saw that even the service of his father was better than the servitude of sin, and turned his back on his miserable plight to return to his father with words of confession ready formed to express his contrition.

When he was a great way off his father saw him, had great compassion on him, ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him. A banquet was prepared to celebrate with joy the lost son's return; the best robe was procured to signify his reception into the family; and the ring was obtained for his finger to show the binding nature of the father's love. Forgiveness was ready for him even before he left the husks; he had to return and claim it. The luxury of home he found in the father's presence.

When the elder brother came from the field the strains of music from the house surprised him. He inquired the cause, and when he heard that a feast was being given to express the joy of his father at the return of his prodigal brother, he would not go in. The father went out to him and entreated him, but he sullenly complained of his love for the lost, and spoke as if he who had remained at home had been deprived of the due reward of his merits. Gently the father talked to him, and told him of his perpetual recompense in his father's wealth. He may not have had the rapture of the returned prodigal, but he might have possessed the joy of uninterrupted peace.

On another occasion, when our Lord was teaching His disciples, He told them the parable of the Unjust Steward, a story of worldly acuteness to illustrate a lesson on spiritual

prudence. In the East the tenants of a landowner paid their rent in kind; his steward having been found dishonest, and fearing poverty on being dismissed, made what he thought a suitable provision for the future by friendly overtures to his master's tenants, with appropriate concessions at his master's expense.

Many difficulties have arisen in the interpretation of this parable, owing to Jesus commending the prudence of the man who cheated his master. Some people regard the whole parable as a specimen of the ironical method our Lord adopted in dealing with the Pharisees; but this explanation assumes that the parable was spoken only to the Pharisees. The concluding words give the key to its meaning. It is not the dishonesty of the steward which Jesus approved, but his foresight. The test of a man's real value is the ultimate aim of his life. Some men try to make the best of two aims, the service of self and the service of God, and fail in both. If the unjust steward had hesitated in carrying out his crime, and allowed his conscience to hamper or to hinder him, he would have failed hopelessly and lost both his stewardship, in which he had been unfaithful, and the friends he tried by a trick to secure. Therefore his lord commended his foresight, and Jesus said that in such prudence the children of this world are wiser than the children of light — that is, with reference to their own standard of life. Their choice having once been made, its success depended on the determination with which they acted upon it. If a man chooses the service of God he should be just as keen and courageous in his service as worldly people are in their particular choice.

The Pharisees who heard the parable treated Jesus with open derision. His words had touched the spring of their corrupt lives. They imagined that the problem of serving God and satisfying their instinct for gain had been successfully solved. No one, they thought, could doubt their future safety; their example of service in their attendance at the Temple, and its display of tithing, made it secure. Yet they loved the wealth

they sought with diligence. Love of money is the most prominent feature of Eastern life; money forms the chief topic of conversation. It is a subject of perennial interest, a source of infinite joy. Every piece of money upon which a man can lay his hands is put in a safe place, and the safest place is the earth. Coins by the bushel have been turned up by the ploughshare in the field. Occasionally a little earthen jar [11] containing shekels appears, to the delight of the seeker after wealth. Wherever any digging [12] or excavation work is being carried on in Palestine no explanation will persuade the peasant that the recovery of treasure is not the object of all the work and search.

The Pharisees were told that, though they justified themselves before men, the direction of their hearts was not hidden from God. Into the new Kingdom for which John had prepared the way men were pressing, and the law was being fulfilled. The faithless were those who failed to see it fulfilled in the Kingdom; neither the law itself nor even a tittle [13] of it would fail.

In order to make the lesson which He had conveyed to the Pharisees more plain, Jesus proceeded to exhibit in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus the future life as it is related to the present. He showed that, if a worldly man desires in this life intense physical pleasure from the good things he possesses, and gives himself up to the enjoyment of them without any restraint upon himself or thought of others, his heart is set upon them and not upon God. Having made his choice, he cannot expect anything different. The power of association continues in his memory, which plays an important part in future retribution and increases the misery of the lost. The mind, being like a sensitized plate, develops in the next sphere, and, having the capacity to retain impressions, it has also the energy to recall them. What might have been tortures the

[11] 2 Cor. iv. 7. [12] St. Matt. xxv. 18; Josh. vii. 21; St. Matt. xiii. 44.
[13] κεραία = tittle, the smallest stroke of a letter.

soul besides the issues of self-indulgence. God is no respecter of persons. Man chooses now between the good things and the evil things. Ample opportunities present both of them to men. The Rich Man represents those who forget God in the use they make of the good things of life. The beggar Lazarus, neglected at the rich man's gate, the recipient of the broken meat, whose sores were aggravated by the attention of the pariah dogs, the scavengers of the city streets, looked for his enjoyment of the better life of the Kingdom of God. The rich man was not tormented because he had been rich, nor was the beggar happy on account of his former poverty. Their feelings were determined by the remembrance of the past, of the choice they had made. The rich man's view of the repose of the beggar in Abraham's bosom [14] was a picture of what might have been for him, and to save his brethren from a fate similar to his own he asked that Lazarus should be sent to warn them of their latter end; but he was told that, if they would not heed the message of the law and the prophets, neither would they believe a messenger who had risen from the dead.

The Pharisees were not long disposed to let Jesus alone; they continually devised means to gain an advantage, generally by questions, in the hope that by some mistaken judgment they might entangle Him in a decision against the law. One of the most difficult problems of Eastern life has ever been the matter of divorce. The laxity of the law is so prevalent in Jewish circles at the present time in Jerusalem that a badly cooked dinner is sufficient cause for a man to put away his wife. Among the lower orders it is possible for a man, in asking for a marriage certificate, to take out a bill of divorce at the same time for any future emergency, and discount will be given for the two documents.

In our Lord's time a decided opposition of opinion was expressed regarding this question. Two different schools of

[14] Abraham's bosom depicted the abode of the righteous dead. The figure is taken from the place of the children on the breast of a parent.

thought divided the people, and the difference was seen in their customs.

Moses gave the law that a man might divorce his wife. The Pharisees asked Jesus if it was lawful for a man "to put away his wife for every cause."[15] He answered, "Have ye not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female? And said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together let no man put asunder." They say unto Him, "Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement and to put her away?" He saith unto them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts." Then He gave His own law regarding adultery. "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."[16]

Loftier wisdom and greater courage than the Pharisees had ever seen baffled them. Even the disciples were startled by this Divine exposition of the law of marital conduct, and suggested that it might be better not to marry. But no sanction was given for celibacy. The men who did not marry, for reasons satisfactory to themselves, were not on that account betters than others, only different from them.

As if in comment on these great thoughts, the people, having noticed preparations for departure, hurriedly brought their children for the legacy of His blessing. His disciples, anxious to save their Master from being needlessly disturbed, rebuked the parents, but happily Jesus saw them and called them unto Him and said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of God."[17] Women and children found a ready champion in Jesus. His regard for them has changed men's attitude towards them, and placed the children in the forefront of love. His saying that

[15] St. Matt. xix. 3, 4, 5.
[16] St. Matt. xix. 9.
[17] St. Luke xviii. 16.

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Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God

Mark X: 14

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Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go

John XI: 44

"Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child shall in nowise enter therein" [18] was soon justified in an incident that followed.

A young man of good family and great wealth,[19] attracted by the reputation of Jesus as a Teacher, came running to Him, and, prostrating himself at His feet, breathlessly said, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" His style of address, though intended as a mark of admiration, exhibited his need of understanding the position of Jesus. The Master asked, "Why callest thou Me good?" He wished first to show him the mistaken idea he had in his mind of the One Whom he addressed; that He was not a good or saintly Rabbi as He might have appeared to the young ruler. Jesus did not describe Himself; He merely set aside the young man's description as wrong, then pointed him to the commandments. Apparently surprised at the answer he received, the ruler said, "All these have I kept from my youth up." He had lived a blameless life, keeping the letter of the law in all sincerity, and Jesus, perceiving the truth of his statement, looked on him and loved him.[20]

But the young man had not been satisfied with himself and what he had done; a conscious and instinctive longing for something better than the faithful discharge of external duties filled his heart; he groped for something higher. And, in order to reach it, he imagined that something else could be done. He might well have been staggered when Jesus proposed an act of self-denial so different from what he had ever conceived, so contrary to the ideas of the time. He thought of external work instead of internal worth. Although he was a product of the age in which he lived, he had not the pride of the Pharisee; his transparent and lovable nature presented a strange and remarkable picture, considering his circumstances, and we may be surprised at the way in which Jesus dealt with him. He said to him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that

[18] St. Luke xviii. 17.
[19] St. Luke xviii. 18, etc.
[20] St. Mark x. 21.

thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow Me." But when the young man heard that saying, "he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." [21] St. Mark reports the need of one thing in the young ruler without defining it, but the record of St. Matthew, "If thou wilt be perfect" is equal to "If thou wishest to be complete, one thing is needed." In principle it was the answer to all under the law, whose highest ideal of righteousness was doing instead of being. Jesus wanted the man and not his works, and only when the young ruler had stripped himself of everything and stood in the bare consciousness of self could he become a true follower of Jesus. Nothing must come between God and man for the right relationship to be established. What Christ taught He practised. He asked no more than He gave Himself. For eternal life to be real to a man it had to be apprehended as the life with God alone, without any thought of anything else. It set before the rich young man an ideal too high for him to attain; not perhaps too high for him to appreciate. He felt unable to reach its lofty sphere, and sorrowfully turned away. For a moment he stood on the threshold of the Kingdom, just for a moment, with a craving for it that moved his heart and almost tore it asunder; then he refused to enter. Called from the security of his observance of the law and the comfort of his earthly possessions for life's great adventure, to face a situation in which nothing of his own would assist him, but where he would find God, he dare not risk the venture of leaving all to trust in Him. It looks like a tragedy: to be so near, hesitate, and turn away. When Jesus saw that he was sorrowful, He said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God! [22] For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle,[23]

[21] St. Matt. xix. 21, 22. [22] St. Luke xviii. 24.

[23] St. Luke xviii. 25. A common and plausible explanation has often been given by calling the little door of the city gate "the needle's eye," but it is untrue both to fact and life. A camel never attempts to enter the city in this way, the aperture is too small, and the gate is not known as the Needle's Eye, but Bab Ezreer, *i.e.* little gate. Even if the camel

than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." Jesus illustrated the difficulty in true Eastern fashion by referring to the biggest animal the people had ever seen, and the smallest hole with which they were acquainted, and thus emphasized the impossibility of a man's own efforts. The people might well have been amazed, and they said, "Who then shall be saved?" Jesus answered, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." [24]

Peter replied, as if in doubt about his own position and that of his friends, "Lo! we have left all and followed Thee." By way of explanation and encouragement, after stating that self-sacrifice would not be without reward, Jesus impressed upon His disciples more fully, by the parable of the Labourers in the Market-place, that entering into the Kingdom of Heaven had nothing to do with the nature of exchange or recompense. God admitted according to His will and in His own order all whom He would, that Gentiles might be received before Jews, and the young left before the old, and that in that happy state none would complain about his place or pay. The parable has about it a rich local colour, as labourers even to-day may be found standing idle in the market-place waiting to be hired, and are easily recognized by their garments: one coat, the sign of the workman, either hanging loose from the shoulder, if he is a countryman, or bound with a girdle, attracts attention; his position in the streets where these men assemble is known to all who hire them. Although one of them might be standing in his usual place, he will decline an offer of work if he wears two coats; his attire then indicates his holiday.

kneels to be unloaded, as is sometimes suggested, it cannot move until it regains its feet. Besides, St. Luke introduces the word *βελόνης*, commonly used for the needle employed in surgical operations.

[24] St. Luke xviii. 27.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

Just before Jesus closed His ministry in Perea a message came from the sisters of Bethany informing Him that their brother Lazarus was sick. They thought the simple intimation respecting their brother's need and their distress was sufficient to create a response in the heart of Jesus. Belief in His willingness to aid them without a direct appeal shows how greatly they valued His love, yet instead of hurrying to their assistance He contentedly dispatched a reply that the sickness was "not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."[1] Such unconcern seemed utterly at variance with affectionate regard, but the Lord's delays were never without reason, they had a meaning which became manifest in His own time. He had been teaching His disciples that death is not the end of all things, and He wished to prove it. The healing of Lazarus would not accomplish His purpose; death had to be vanquished to furnish the proof of immortality and exhibit the glory of the Eternal God.

After hearing the sad news of the illness of the man whom He loved, Jesus abode two more days in His distant sphere of labour apparently unmoved; then He casually spoke to His disciples about going to Judea without first revealing the cause of His intended departure from Bethabara. Alarmed at His proposal, they reminded Him of the danger to which He would be exposed by the venture; but He answered,[2] "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" twelve hours for work and duty, when the light for guidance keeps men from failure. He said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep."[3] His disciples thought He referred to rest as

[1] St. John xi. 4.
[2] St. John xi. 9.
[3] St. John xi. 11.

a sign of improvement, and said, "Lord, if he sleep he shall do well," although three of them had heard the same expression used with reference to death. He then told them plainly that Lazarus was dead. He even said He was glad for their sakes that He was not present, "to the intent they might believe," [4]— a statement that must have astonished them. He could have cured Lazarus by His word as He healed the son of the nobleman of Capernaum, but He wished to show His disciples the power of an endless life, and destroy the horror of death. It would not have been easy to watch His friend Lazarus die in the presence of His disciples, and still less reasonable to do the work He wished to perform after seeing him pass away. He was glad, therefore, to remain at a distance until Lazarus died. "Nevertheless," said Jesus, "let us go unto him." The enterprise now appeared unnecessary, and to Thomas it seemed full of danger on account of the determination of the rulers in Jerusalem to destroy Jesus, but love and loyalty to his Lord prompted him to say, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." [5]

No further information had reached Jesus from the sisters of Bethany when He told His disciples that Lazarus was dead: He knew as the Son of God, Who knoweth all things. He waited two days after receiving the message that His friend was sick, waited until He knew that Lazarus was dead and buried; then He left the Bethany in northern Perea and reached the village of Martha and Mary on the fourth day.[6]

Many of their friends in Jerusalem, about two miles distant from the home of Lazarus, now known as El Azarieh (the place of Lazarus), had come to mourn with his sorrow-stricken sisters; but as soon as Martha heard of the approach of Jesus she left them to go and meet Him. Immediately she saw Him she said, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died. But I know that, even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask

[4] St. John xi. 15. [5] St. John xi. 16.

[6] Jericho is reached from Bethany in northern Perea on the third day and Bethany near Jerusalem on the fourth day. Burial follows death in a few hours.

of God He will give it Thee." [7] The presence of Jesus inspired her with hope. He replied, "Thy brother shall rise again." Thinking of the distant gathering of the spirits of the departed, she answered, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus declared, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" She could not fathom the depth of this great truth, but she acknowledged the fact which embraced it when she answered, "Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God."

After making this great confession she went in search of Mary, and, having found her, she whispered to her, "The Master is come and calleth for thee." [8] Instantly Mary arose and went to the place outside the village where Martha met Him. The mourners who had come to comfort the sisters thought she had gone to her brother's grave to weep, and followed her. As soon as she came to Jesus she fell adoringly at His feet and said, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died." When He saw her tears, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, "He groaned in spirit and was troubled." They took Him to the sepulchre, and there He also wept, and some of those who saw Him regarded His sorrow as evidence of His love; others said, "Could not this Man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man had not died?" [9]

On reaching the "grave," a chamber hewn out of the rock on the side of the hill with a stone in front, a sign of the last resting-place of a man of wealth,[10] Jesus said, "Take ye away the stone." [11] His command alarmed Martha, who reminded her Lord that her brother had been in the grave four days, and she feared the exposure of his body in its corruption. But Jesus said unto her, "Said I not unto thee that if thou

[7] St. John xi. 21, 22. [8] St. John xi. 28. [9] St. John xi. 32–37.
[10] The poor were buried in hollow places dug in the earth; only the rich could afford a sepulchre with a stone before it. [11] St. John xi. 39.

wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God?" [12] The stone was then removed, and Jesus in solemn yet audible tones thanked God the Father for the confirmation of His work, and, turning to the mouth of the sépulchre, He cried, "Lazarus, come forth." [13] And from the grave and gate of death he that had passed within walked out of the tomb bound in the garments of his burial, the warm blood once again coursing through his veins in vigorous health. His return to earth restored him to his family; it also offered him to mankind as evidence of immortality, which men have failed to realize because of their unbelief. Every step in the working of the miracle moved towards the revelation of the power in Jesus over death, to show that death is the great illusion, and that those who live in fellowship with Him will never die. He had seen death, but He never treated death like other people. He had never shown the least alarm nor any sorrow for death itself. Later He became sorrowful even unto death, but not sorrowful for death; neither that nor all the problems attending it had ever perplexed Him.

Yet the dread of death is a universal instinct; the mystery by which it is surrounded increases men's fear of it, and the certainty that sooner or later they will succumb to its power causes them to shrink from contemplating their departure into what is often called the Great Unknown. It is hard for a man to leave everything and everybody behind him, and step as it were into the future, separate and alone. The indifference which some men show is often the absence of courage and not the proof of it. Yet many have faced death with indomitable will and noble fortitude; others have welcomed it as a way out of their misery. But neither the attitude of the brave nor the submission of the weary disposes of the fact that the mystery, and the certainty, and the loneliness of death have laid hold on men and their fear of death has dimmed the glory of the Eternal God.

Christ's miracle was designed to vindicate His glory by a

[12] St. John xi. 40. [13] St. John xi. 43.

manifestation of the truth, which men have held but lightly, that in mortal man there is an immortal soul.

In addition to the evidence of the resurrection, every man has a doubt about death being the end of life. It is inconceivable that the progress and improvement which he sees in the moral principles of man, his accumulation of knowledge, and his progress in virtue, should be of no future use to him, as his experience has shown him that the best things are the most permanent. There must be a future life to justify his present experience, and to allow his full growth, otherwise development will be arrested, and the best in man can never come to full fruition. The fact that a man has attained so much is a sign that he must attain still more. In life we behold illimitable progression; as also in the historic habit of thought we find that the mental habits of bygone generations enter the very spirit of present modes of thinking.

Besides all this there is in man the desire for a future life, his growth in those qualities which endure strengthens it, and as all natural desires are naturally gratified, he cannot see why this should fail to obtain satisfaction.

Then there is the expectation of a final adjustment of things; so many are not cleared up on earth, and the very nature of justice demands that the tangled web of life shall be loosed and all its imperfections filled.

All this is suggestive, but uncertain. We do not wonder that men wish it were true, and dread that it may be false. If further evidence can be added to support the dim guess the soul of man has formed, it is worth while looking for it.

There are thousands of men who have never examined the evidence of resurrection; they are incapable of estimating its value if they received it. They know nothing about the laws of evidence; they have had no practice in balancing the value of testimony; yet these simple men have been brought into contact with something above and beyond their ordinary experience, which has assured them of the reality of their hope in the resurrection of the dead. Their natural sensations tell

them one thing, but their faith tells them another. "He that believeth on the Son of God [14] hath the witness in himself."

When a man confines himself to the light of the ordinary experience of things around him, and allows his natural feeling to absorb his attention, he prevents the light from growing brighter that will lead him to another experience. He lacks the faith which is the evidence of the spirit, the state in which the things of God become glorious realities. This inward condition cannot reveal a fact like the resurrection, but it can receive the fact the moment it is revealed without requiring evidence to prove it; and Jesus furnished the proof when He revealed the fact in the resurrection of Lazarus. He set His seal on it with His own resurrection. Through faith in Him He gives to man the life that will rise. It is the life we call spiritual; not a state, but a relationship with a force proceeding directly from the Giver of life eternal; it is the life of the Son of Man which He lived when He said, "I am the resurrection and the life," and which He still lives in the humanity He has redeemed. In this way He is among men, offering them the gift of an endless life. By the union with Christ, by keeping in touch with Him, men partake of His life, the life eternal, and the life identified with God is independent of death; however indistinct the likeness in a man, he has something that will never perish.[15] And when his body decays, his eyes become dim, his limbs inert, and his heart still, he is no longer separate and alone as he passes away from earth. The uncertainty of the future has gone, and its mystery is dissolved by faith in Jesus Christ.

Some of the Jews who saw the miracle believed on Jesus, but others went straight to the Pharisees and told them what He had done,[16] not apparently to glorify God, but to seek the favour of men. Within a few hours it became known in Jerusalem that a wonderful miracle had been performed by

[14] 1 John v. 10.
[15] Archbishop Lang, *The Miracles of Jesus*, p. 274. [16] St. John xi. 46.

Jesus and in a most public manner. It was reported that He had raised a man from the dead, even in the presence of men who were hostile to Him, some of whom, convinced of His power, had confessed their faith in Him. This serious news caused great excitement, and alarmed the Scribes and Pharisees. The storm that the presence of Jesus had created when He was last in Jerusalem had been subdued for a while; now it broke out afresh and with greater violence. The miracle was only the indirect cause; the rulers were not angry with Jesus for raising Lazarus from the dead, it was the publicity arising from His work and the fear that He might influence the popular mind in favour of the statements regarding Himself, His claim of a Divine origin.

The Sanhedrin were hurriedly summoned [17] and Caiaphas the High Priest, who presided, delivered what at first sight seems a strange address. In it we have the first trace of the charge against Jesus at His trial, the argument which eventually forced the hand of Pontius Pilate, "If thou let this man go thou art Cæsar's friend." [18]

Caiaphas said in his address, "If we let Him thus alone . . . the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." [19] He based this opposition on the ground of patriotism. The motive which controlled their minds was political. Hidden below this ostensible reason for taking action was their intense hatred, and many causes contributed to the bitter feeling in them. The teaching of Jesus, which identified religion with goodness, and brought man into contact with God without the aid of priests and the use of external ordinances, gave offence; that religion belonged to the heart, and not to intellectual diversion, increased their enmity. All this carried weight against Him; but more than all, and yet what was the essence of all, was the Divine origin claimed by Jesus. The Messiah, the Jews expected from the line of David, belonged to the Jews alone, for the aggrandizement of their nation. A Divine Messiah offered all people an equal place with

[17] St. John xi. 47. [18] St. John xix. 12. [19] St. John xi. 48.

the Children of Israel, and the idea became more intolerable, and provoked greater hostility, the more the rulers realized the mission of Jesus. His claim offended their national instincts, and in their eyes it became a crime. He was a bold Reformer in the very centre of Judaism. With consummate courage He had declared that God was the Father of all men and not of a particular race. For His offence they attempted to stone Him when He was last in Jerusalem. It suited the purpose of the rulers then to incite the people against Him by proclaiming Him a traitor to Israel. When the chance of His falling a victim to their scheme on this charge threatened to disappear in the publicity He had now obtained by the miracle of Bethany, they were forced to seek His destruction on the new ground of treason to Rome. The object of the meeting of the Sanhedrin became clear when the Jew Caiaphas posed as a Roman patriot. It was useless to appeal to Rome for a judgment on the charge of blasphemy; that offence appealed to the Jews and inflamed the populace against the Man of Nazareth. A more certain case for Cæsar's judgment was the one adopted by the decision of the Sanhedrin, when they virtually sentenced Jesus to death at their meeting by agreeing that it was expedient "that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." [20]

Years after St. John saw in the judgment of Caiaphas something which escaped the attention of the Council, a deeper truth than their prejudiced minds could perceive, and which he did not hesitate to call prophetic: "Being High Priest that year, he prophesied." [21] The truth contained the central doctrine of Christianity, the vicarious sacrifice of Christ.

[20] St. John xi. 50.

[21] St. John xi. 51.

CHAPTER XXXV

UNTO THE END

From that time[1] "Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews," He retired to a mountain village of Ephraim about fifteen miles north-east of Jerusalem. The district had associations with which He was familiar. Those barren heights on the south-east of the village and the deep gullies between them reminded Him of the long preparation for His great temptation. His last dread conflict was approaching, when all the forces of evil would again be arrayed against Him, and during the brief period He and His disciples spent in seclusion He braced Himself for His final victory. He may have told them the story of His former struggle and rehearsed the scenes during their sojourn in the wilderness. From the hills around them they saw the sterile ground of the desert places where He wandered, and the high mountain across the Jordan Valley from whence He gazed on the kingdoms of the world. The victory won in those barren solitudes prefigured the triumph of His cross. He remained there until the time drew near for His last journey to Jerusalem, and the last great battle for the souls of men, when death was defeated at the moment when it seemed triumphant. The length of His stay in the wilderness cannot be determined; it may have been forty days. All we know with certainty is that the raising of Lazarus marked a definite stage in the last period of our Lord's ministry. After the Feast of Dedication in December He went to Bethabara in Perea. No reference is made to any movements from that retreat until He walked to Bethany for the miracle which alarmed the rulers and necessitated His retirement to the village by the wilderness.

[1] St. John xi. 54.

Ever since His first sojourn in this barren region Jesus had steadily and fearlessly walked along the way of life He had made for Himself; the last stage of His earthly pilgrimage had now to be traversed. Deeper fell the shadows on the way home to the Father; brighter glowed through the rifts in the darkness the light of Eternal Day. Jesus told His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem where "all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished." [2] He gave them details of the last events. Still they understood not; His sayings dropped into the minds of His disciples in bewildering confusion. So great a scheme as the world's salvation could not be readily grasped; it had to be enacted for their understanding to realize its meaning. Only when the last struggle [3] issued in resurrection glory and there came the Spirit of their risen and ascended Lord into their hearts did they see clearly all that He had said and done for mankind.

From the mountains of Ephraim overlooking the Jordan, the Passover caravan from Galilee, which went down the valley road that year, could easily be seen. As it entered the plain past the Damieh ford Jesus and His disciples joined the band of pilgrims, among whom were disciples from the northern province, His mother, and the holy women who had ministered unto Him. He walked before them as they marched on their way to Jericho.

During the journey Salome,[4] the mother of James and John, came with her two sons to Jesus to make a strange request. First worshipping Him, as if the act of homage might win His favour, she asked for her sons the posts of honour in His Kingdom, that one might sit on His right hand and the other on His left. He gently rebuked them, saying, "Ye know not what ye ask." They asked in their ignorance for places soon to be occupied by two thieves. In their imagination they pictured a throne: Jesus saw a cross. He told them of a cup of bitterness and a baptism of blood, and asked them if they

[2] St. Luke xviii. 31. [3] St. John xv. 26. [4] St. Matt. xx. 20.

could drink with Him the cup and enter into the same baptism, and they answered that they could. "Yes," said He, "ye shall drink indeed of My cup, . . . but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." [5]

When the ten Apostles heard of the request of the sons of Zebedee they were naturally indignant; [6] but Jesus called them to Him and told them that they were not to be like earthly rulers with their authority, that the highest and most permanent honour would be gained by the greatest humility, and that even the Son of Man came to be a Servant, and to give His life a ransom for many.

This was the first distinct declaration of redemption. Jesus had spoken already of salvation, of the saving of the lost; [7] now He states that it would be accomplished by the payment of a price, and that price was His own life. Quite casually the words slipped from Him as He talked about the matter in dispute amongst the Apostles. The contrast between their desires and His work seemed to open His lips for His thoughts to be revealed. The disciples may not have fully realized the tremendous import of His utterance at the moment when they were so much concerned about their own position, but they could attach no other meaning to it than that He who spoke of ransom [8] meant to offer His life for the redemption of others.

The word "ransom" means primarily a price paid for deliverance, and in this sense it is found in the Greek version of the Old Testament [9] for the "ransom" which is accepted instead of a man's life in Exod. xxi. 30. The law of blood still in force in the wilderness, the chief factor of desert life, illustrates in the most graphic manner the significance of ransom. [10]

[5] St. Matt. xx. 23. [6] St. Matt. xx. 24. [7] St. Matt. xviii. 11.
[8] Bishop Ellicott's *New Testament Commentary*, on St. Matt. xx. 28.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] "It is a duty of paramount importance for the nearest relative of a murdered man to take vengeance. Should the man-slayer escape, unless retribution is made by a substantial payment, his fate is only delayed for a time; there is a mark upon him, and men soon learn that there is blood

It implied in the case of Jesus that His death would, in some way, be representative and vicarious. The same thought, expressed in the language of the Epistles about the redemption in Jesus Christ,[11] "and the language of all Christendom, in speaking of the Christ as our Redeemer, are the natural developments of that one pregnant word." [12] No shade of doubt rests on its real meaning.

As they drew nearer to Jericho the odour of the flowers in its gardens reached the Passover caravan on the scented air of the valley, and the sound of the tramp of pilgrim feet struck on the ears of the poor on the outskirts of the city. Expectant eyes turned to gaze on the procession, and when it became known that the Man of Galilee accompanied the throng, the unusual noise of spectators collecting to view the extraordinary sight attracted the attention of two blind men. Hearing the sound, they enquired the cause, and when they were told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by His name kindled within them a great hope. It conveyed to them the wonder of His works, and they cried out, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Thou Son of David." [13] The multitude rebuked them, and told them to hold their peace, but they cried the more, "Have

between him and another, called the 'heir of blood,' on whom the duty is laid to see that a ransom is provided, either by the life of him who shed the blood or a price fixed by agreement.

". . . If satisfaction is not given, atonement not made, and the slayer of his fellow-man refuses to pay 'the price of blood,' then a breach is made in the relations between the tribes, and a blood feud follows. . . . When a man desires to pay the price of ransom, and discharge a debt of blood, he will have friends or relations to act on his behalf and intercede for him. . . . The price of blood varies according to the position and strength of the family concerned, and the importance of the man that was slain. . . . It is forty camels in Arabia . . . in Syria the price is higher. . . . His relations will help to find the cattle required to pay for his deliverance" (*The Witness of the Wilderness,* pp. 163, 164, 165.)

The best of the men of the wilderness refuse to barter their kinsmen's blood for gold, and, in order to show that no price can be paid in cash or kind, fix a prohibitive price, and the statement is made that without the shedding of blood there is no remission. It must be life for life, blood for blood, because it contains an element of incomparable value, for the blood is the life.

[11] Rom. iii. 24; 1 Cor. vi. 20; 1 Peter i. 19.

[12] Bishop Ellicott, *ibid.*

[13] St. Matt. xx. 30.

mercy on us." Jesus heard their pitiful appeal; He stood still and called them, and said, "What will ye that I should do unto you?" They asked that their eyes should be opened; and Jesus, having compassion on them, "touched their eyes, and immediately they received their sight, and they followed Him." [14]

Others desired to look on the face of Jesus. One man of small stature, unable to gain his wish because of the crowd, ran on before the procession and climbed into a sycomore tree.[15] Jesus saw him, and, recognizing the man as Zacchæus, the chief Publican, said, "Zacchæus, make haste and come down, for today I must abide at thy house." [16] Joyfully the Publican descended from the tree to become the host of Jesus. Very different feelings moved the people who noticed the incident; they murmured because Jesus had "gone to be a guest with a man who was a sinner." [17]

The position of Jericho at the junction of various trade routes required a custom-house; it was also the centre of a rich district farmed by the Roman Government, and the Publicans were numerous, and probably on account of many opportunities for extortion, were also rich. Their occupation at all times subjected them to a great deal of abuse; it would be doubly odious to the people so near Jerusalem; and the richer the Publican the more intensely would he be hated, because his riches implied closer association with the Roman Government, and a greater use of the means at his disposal for gaining wealth. That the Man of Galilee should consort with a Publican was enough to rouse a feeling of indignation in all pious and patriotic Jews. It was a great thing for Jesus to propose to go home with this man, and Zacchæus knew it, he felt it, he realized that something had happened quite different from anything he had experienced.

Zacchæus was a Jew as well as a Publican; he was also a

[14] St. Matt. xx. 34.

[15] The sycomore-tree is known also as the Egyptian fig-tree, and should not be confused with the English sycamore tree. St. Luke xix. 4.

[16] St. Luke xix. 5.

[17] St. Luke xix. 7.

man who felt the sting of the world's scorn, the shame of the world's disgrace, and something stirred in his heart, a dim consciousness appeared of his need of salvation. He showed it by his desire to see Jesus. The Divine Spirit, seeking the souls of men, had touched Zacchæus, he felt the movement from afar, and when Jesus came to Jericho he sought His face, and Jesus the Divine Son knew what was in the Publican's heart, and spoke to him, identified Himself with him; Jesus found him. The whole transaction is summed up in the words of Jesus, "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." [18] Apparently the reason why our Lord makes this declaration is the vivid illustration in the case of Zacchæus of the salvation of the lost. He says of him, "This day is salvation come to this house," and the man He saved, in his recovery, offered to make restitution even more completely than might be expected to be necessary. When he saw the love of God in Jesus, he saw himself as he was, and as he ought to be; and, in order to become what he ought to be, he said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation I restore him fourfold." [19] He probably held his office in connection with the imperial revenue from the soil of the most fertile region in Judea; in such a position he would be better able to deal with the victims of extortion who resided in the district than if he had been a collector of custom from the people passing through the city.

Slowly the people gathered for the pilgrim caravan to reform for the last stage of its journey up the barren mountain road to Jerusalem. There must have been a restlessness in the crowd as their destination seemed so near. Tenseness of feeling in expectant people communicates itself to others. Portentous events cast their shadows before them. The procession contained many people who were drawn by mingled motives to Jesus. They had a certain good-will towards Him when under His influence, wavering in their loyalty accord-

[18] St. Luke xix. 10. [19] St. Luke xix. 8.

ing to circumstances. All His followers looked for the coming of His Kingdom, and evidently expected it soon to appear. To repress their impatience and to teach the need of diligent service in their waiting for the King, Jesus told them the parable of the Pounds.[20] He said, "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom." The historical allusion in this statement arose from local knowledge. It was exactly what Archelaus had done, whose palace the people saw in Jericho. He went to Rome to receive for himself a kingdom. Jesus turned this incident to account in His lesson, indicating a resemblance in Himself, on the eve of His departure, to the nobleman who called ten of his servants and delivered unto them ten pounds. He taught them the duty of faithfulness in the use of all He had committed unto them; the uncertainty of the date of His return; the certainty of their accountability on His return; the reward of those who served Him; and the punishment of the unfaithful.

Onward moved the pilgrim caravan up the steep and rugged heights above the Jordan valley towards Jerusalem on the Friday before the great and dreadful day in Israel's destiny. Jesus left the procession at Bethany late in the afternoon to rest in the home of His friends. The great company from Galilee dispersed on reaching the Mount of Olives, some to stay with friends in the city, others to settle on the slope of the hill in the booths they built for their temporary lodging. The disciples followed their Lord.

The next day, being the Sabbath, was spent quietly in the Bethany household. As soon as the Sabbath had passed Jesus was entertained at the house of Simon the leper.[21] We do not know what connection there was between the house of Simon and the sisters of Bethany. Martha apparently superintended the feast, her brother Lazarus sat at meat, and her sister Mary shared in the hospitable attention.

The banquet very naturally attracted considerable notice,

[20] St. Luke xix. 11. [21] St. Matt. xxvi. 6.

not only on account of Jesus, but because of the presence of Lazarus,[22] and a report of the supper carried to the rulers in Jerusalem caused so much perturbation that they decided to remove the evidence of the great miracle of Jesus and put Lazarus to death.[23] The most memorable incident occurred while our Lord reclined at supper. Mary, to whom the words of Jesus had been so precious, and from Whom she had received the knowledge of eternal life, the Mary who sat at His feet, came again to His feet with an alabaster box of very precious ointment. Having broken the box, she anointed first His head, and then His feet, and wiped them with the long tresses of her hair. The aroma of her ointment spread through the house. The story of her loving deed has circulated throughout the world. But one man there could neither appreciate the scent of the ointment nor apprehend the spirit of the act. Judas, the treasurer of the apostolic band, looked on the service of the holy woman with lowering brow and bitter feeling. He thought of the spikenard and what it might have done for him. His sordid mind and covetous spirit found no joy in the service of love, he saw no sense in anything but practical advantage. His Master watched the working of his mean disposition, vindicated Mary's deed, and explained its meaning. He told Judas, who complained [24] of the waste of such a valuable substance,[25] who said that it might have been sold for 300 denarii (nearly £10) and given to the poor, and some of the disciples who appeared to support the man who carried the bag, to "let her alone." Jesus said "against the day of My burying hath she kept this." He welcomed with gladness the spontaneous generosity of this woman's heart.

Judas felt his bag had greater claims than his Lord. Being a thief,[26] he could not understand that there are some gifts which cannot be sold, which even lose their sanctity when their value is appraised. Love sets no bounds to service, counts

[22] St. John xii. 9. [23] St. John xii. 10. [24] St. John xii. 5.
[25] Another sign of the wealth of the Bethany household.
[26] St. John xii. 6.

nothing too precious as an offering for the object of affection. The loving deed of Mary of Bethany [27] represents the highest act of devotion to our Lord, and the savour of that devotion changed the atmosphere of the feast and has enriched the world.

[27] St. Matt. xxvi. 13.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

The startling news that a man in Bethany, less than two miles from Jerusalem, had been raised from the dead, and that Jesus of Nazareth, Who had performed the miracle, was there with him, having been circulated amongst the people in the Holy City, great curiosity excited the multitudes assembled for the Passover. Crowds of visitors and residents sauntered along the way to Bethany, hoping to see the Man of Galilee. The more eager amongst the throng hastened to the village. The excitement grew to wild enthusiasm, and the people went mad with admiration. They cut branches from the palm-trees, the symbols of victory for a great occasion, and made preparations to accompany Jesus to Jerusalem.

Before He started on His journey He sent two of His disciples to Bethphage for suitable means to make His entry into the Holy City accord with the nature of His mission. He told them where they would find an ass's colt, and that they were to bring it for His use. In Eastern lands warrior kings appeared on horses with gay equipments and followers in martial array; men of peace rode on asses; and Jesus was the King of peace. The dignity of His bearing and the majesty of His presence converted the humble aspect of the situation into that of a distinguished spectacle without changing its meek and lowly character.

For the saddle of the ass the disciples of Jesus placed their garments, and as He set forth on His triumphal progress towards Jerusalem the crowds increased, and the ferment grew with the crowds. They spread their garments beneath His feet, over His head they waved their palms, louder and louder the people in the great procession shouted "Hosanna!" and the spectators on the side of the road joined in the great ac-

clamation. "Hosanna!" [1] cried the followers of Jesus, and the response was given by the multitude: "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." [2] "Blessed be the Kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord." [3]

Thus was the saying of the prophet fulfilled, "Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." [4]

Dismayed by the multitude of joyous people, the Pharisees, in despair at the popular demonstration, dare not lay their hands on Him Whom they determined to slay, so they blamed one another, saying, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, all the world has gone after Him." [5]

And, what was most amazing, some of them even turned to Jesus in their helplessness and said, "Master, rebuke Thy disciples." He answered, "I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." [6]

Past the olive groves, by the vineyards, in the shade of the waving palms, the Messiah rode round the shoulder of the hill of Olivet, and before Him gleamed the city and its Temple in the sunlight. As His eyes rested on the glorious spectacle, the shouts of exultation of the fickle multitude could not allay the striving of His heart nor stifle the spring of emotion rising within Him. He stopped,[7] tears ran down His cheeks, and He uttered words of sorrow: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." [8]

[1] St. Matt. xxi. 9. [2] St. Luke xix. 38. [3] St. Mark xi. 10.
[4] St. Matt. xxi. 5; Zech. ix. 9; Isa. lxii. 11. [5] St. John xii. 19.
[6] St. Luke xix. 40. [7] St. Luke xix. 41. [8] St. Luke xix. 42–44.

Beneath His gaze the city lay in the beauty of its situation, the splendour of its palaces, and the magnificence of its Temple; but it was not the threatened destruction of its stately buildings which stirred His heart, nor the tragic ending of its history rich in its interest and its associations. It was the eternal destiny of its inhabitants. And here we see how His deep and true humanity is more than a part of a race. He was thinking of the souls of men as well as the Jewish metropolis and nation. The city and its inhabitants immediately before Him were dear to His heart, and for them He was about to die, to shed His blood as freely as He shed His tears; but not for them alone. The words which fell from His lips, applicable at the time for the nation, are appropriate for all mankind.

The day of Jerusalem was the time of its opportunity now swiftly passing from it, the time in which the Redeemer appeared for its salvation. The blindness from which the people suffered was moral insensibility, the hardening of their hearts against truth and duty, and judgment inevitably followed; not from an arbitrary act of God, but the result of the neglect of truth and duty.

Jerusalem's time of visitation was the Advent of Jesus. To its people belonged greater opportunities for a knowledge of God's will than other lands, the enjoyment of greater privileges than other people. God had chosen Jerusalem, set His Temple there and made it the centre of His dealing with the nation. He had selected the city to receive His everlasting freedom and reflect His glory, which Jesus summed up in the word "peace." He came to make it known by his life, His words, and His works. They had seen His miracles, His words they scarcely understood except when their passions were roused by the stern moral principles that He taught. Fitful gleams of a better future were seen in them, and a better way in the life He lived, but few regarded; their hearts were hardened. With their past history ever present as substantial evidence of their spiritual ancestry, the idea of personal holi-

ness they refused to entertain. They were the children of Abraham, and hated the light lest their deeds should be reproved.[9] Jesus had told them to turn from their pride in the past for improvement in the present; to cease looking for a future Deliverer and behold Him now; that in the bondage of Rome under which their pride rebelled there was no degradation comparable with the slavery of sin. They wanted happiness without effort, the contentment of desire without its supreme object, a change outside themselves for comfort, instead of inside for peace. Their day of visitation was passing; the day of judgment was at hand.

Down the sloping road the great and joyous company proceeded in the hope that the people were being led into a life of enjoyment. By the side of the olive-trees in dark Gethsemane Jesus rode to the banks of the Kedron; then up the steep path to the city gate and through its portals into the streets. The people from the housetops and through the latticed windows cried, "Who is this?" and the crowds in the procession answered, "This is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth." [10]

The Messiah had appeared, the King had come with the atmosphere of peace about Him. The whole city was in a commotion, the ferment grew, and perplexed the rulers more and more.

What did the disciples think of their Master now? He had been publicly acclaimed as the King of Peace as he entered the city on the day the paschal lamb was set aside for the sacrifice and supper, and Jesus, as the true Paschal Lamb, was connected with this duty. The disciples thought of nothing in all they had witnessed that associated their Master with either the prophecies of the remote past or the tragic events of the near future. The great triumph renewed their hopes of the glory of an earthly kingdom; it increased the rulers' fears and roused in them a greater passion for the death of Jesus. Behind the trappings of the day's joy, the heart of Jesus throbbed with a great emotion; hidden beneath His serene brow

[9] *Cf.* St. Matt. xiii. 14, 15.

[10] St. Matt. xxi. 10, 11.

His mind worked out the eternal will; the destiny of men moved on its immortal way in the mystery of the Father's love. St. John confessed, when these scenes lay in the background of his life, that "These things understood not the disciples at the first; but when Jesus was glorified then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him." [11]

After looking round the Temple Jesus retired with His disciples to Bethany.

Next day (Monday) He returned with them to the city. One the way a solitary fig-tree attracted His attention, one of those so often found by the side of the road near a town or village without an owner. As in the late spring or early summer a particular kind of fig, called by the natives in these days *duffur*, appears under the leaves, and not in the ordinary part of the tree for bearing, He looked for the fruit, and, finding none, pronounced a curse upon the tree, thus symbolically announcing the doom of the Jewish people, so careful in their outward acts of piety and so fruitless in their lives. Jesus looked for the *duffur* and found nothing but leaves; the time of the ordinary figs, now called *tin*, "was not yet." [12]

Once again the Man of Nazareth went into Jerusalem and cleansed the Temple courts and there taught the people: "It is written, My house is the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." [13] Having cleared the precincts, He commenced His work of healing, and the children in the Temple courts took up the strain of exultation they had heard the day before and cried "Hosanna!" When the Scribes and Pharisees saw the wonderful things that Jesus did they were sore displeased. They complained, especially about the children, and Jesus said, "Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?" [14]

About this time certain Greeks, probably from the Decapolis, came and desired to see Jesus. They went to Philip,

[11] St. John xii. 16.
[12] St. Mark xi. 13.
[13] St. Luke xix. 46.
[14] St. Matt. xxi. 15, 16.

he told Andrew, and both of them agreed to inform Jesus, Who, deeply moved by their request for an interview, said: "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me: and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour. Now is My soul troubled: and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to Him.

"Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.

"This He said signifying what death He should die. The people answered Him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest Thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" [15]

He gave them no direct answer; they knew He had declared Himself to be the Son of Man, so He told them that a little while the light would be with them, and warned them to walk in the light and believe in the light lest the darkness come upon them.[16]

When He had said these things He left them. Although they had seen His work, there was no general acceptance of His word. Some of the chief rulers believed on Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.[17]

[15] St. John xii. 23–29. [16] St. John xii. 36. [17] St. John xii. 43.

Jesus appealed again to them; He told them that to believe on Him meant believing on the Father Who had sent Him; that He came to illuminate the world for men to dwell no more in darkness; [18] that He would not judge those who failed to believe, as He came not to judge the world but to save it. And when the evening came He went out of the city.

[18] St. John xii. 46.

CHAPTER XXXVII

CONFLICT WITH THE RULERS

In the morning (Tuesday), as Jesus returned to Jerusalem with His disciples, they saw the fig-tree which He had cursed, and Peter drew his Master's attention to its shrivelled appearance. It had withered away. Jesus told them to have faith in God, and they would have power to do even more than they had seen in the miracle of the fig-tree; their faith would remove mountains, and whatsoever they asked of God, believing, their request would be granted.

On reaching the Temple the people assembled to hear the Man of Galilee. When the rulers saw the attention of the multitude to His words their anger grew more fierce against Him. The chief priests and the elders came to Him and said, "By what authority doest Thou these things? And who gave Thee this authority?"[1] They intended by their question both to perplex and annoy Him, and to treat His answer as a cause of offence. The only one they expected Him to give was the authority of His Father, and that would be sufficient for their purpose of accusing Him of speaking blasphemy. They had apparently made up their minds to take official notice of His proceedings. He had interfered with the arrangements they had sanctioned, by a violent interruption of the traffic in the Temple courts, and brought discredit on their methods by His action; and He had done it by assuming an authority which convinced the people that He had behind Him a power they might believe was Divine. Let Him now give them some definite statement about Himself and His mission. They were so exasperated with Him they could scarcely restrain their feelings of anger.

He answered them by saying, "I will ask you one question.

[1] St. Matt. xxi. 23.

The baptism of John, whence was it?" [2] It was not His intention to place them in a dilemma. They had demanded from Him the source of His authority, the highest thing about Him, that came direct from God. As they were unlikely to understand anything so lofty, He sought for them a lower plane on which they might stand together: the baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

John's baptism signified the cleansing from sin as a preparation for entering the Kingdom of Heaven, and implied a judgment on the past, and a hope for the future. These two factors in life must first be understood before the rulers could rise to the understanding of the position of Christ. If they had no sense of sin, no desire for its removal, there could be no real hope of Heaven, the Kingdom of the holy God. They would not, therefore, appreciate the distinctive characteristic of Christ, His authority, which He received from Heaven, being so far removed from the sphere where his authority was fixed, and from whence it was derived.

If they admitted that John was a prophet of God their own neglect of the due response to his call for repentance condemned them. If they denied his authority they were in danger of a conflict with the people, who had accepted him as a prophet from God. The indignity of their position was apparent. They were hurled back on the bitterness of their animosity mortified by their defeat; they had repudiated John, as they rejected Christ, through dislike to his message. It touched their pride before it reached their consciences. John was not one of their sect, and not on their side; that alone was sufficient to harden their hearts against him, and hide from them the truth of his message. The people recognized the truth, even those who had refused to believe for their own welfare, and if their rulers had denied it, popular indignation would have been roused against them. They took refuge in their humiliation by pleading ignorance, and said, "We cannot tell."

[2] St. Matt. xxi. 25.

And Jesus said, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."[3] His answer was not an evasive attempt to conceal His authority. He had no desire to escape from their question because they failed to give Him a satisfactory reply. His refusal implied that it would be useless for Him to speak of His claim for their recognition if they were unable to perceive the source of John's message or understand the reason for John's baptism.[4]

A conflict was inevitable between the righteous Lord and the men whose parade of righteous forms became a cloak for their wickedness. On His right side it was for the supremacy of the will of God; on theirs the predominance of their own interests. As soon as He proclaimed the truth and broke the chains of tradition by which the people were bound, the hostility of the rulers commenced, and they never wavered in their opposition to His teaching. Their claim for recognition as the national party was based on their reputation rather than their character. For their patriotism they became popular, and with the people behind them they believed themselves capable of dealing with the Galilean. But their position could only be maintained by the exercise of their power to keep the people from recognizing Him as their Deliverer. It was necessary for them to remove Him to save themselves, and prevent a rising of the populace in His favour. Enough mischief to their cause had been done already, but if they could only place Him in an unfavourable situation without any precipitate action they might succeed. Jesus saw through their machinations and was quite unperturbed. He endeavoured to show them their state for a change to be made in their hearts before it was too late, and He confronted His adversaries with the parable of a man with two sons, whose father said to one of them: "Son, go work today in my vineyard." He refused, then afterwards repented and went. To the other he said likewise. He answered and said, "I go, sir, and went not." "Whether of the twain," said Jesus, "did the will of

[3] St. Matt. xxi. 27. [4] Rev. A. B. Davidson, *Waiting upon God*, p. 144.

his father?" Without perceiving the point in the parable the rulers gave the obvious answer, "The first," and unconsciously brought upon themselves a well-merited rebuke in the comparison Jesus drew between those who honour God with their lips and fail to serve Him with their hearts; and the repentance shown by the Publicans and harlots in their turning to God when John showed them the way of righteousness.[5]

The enemies of Jesus were so discomfited they would gladly have avoided any further controversy, but He pressed the advantage He had gained by another parable,[6] as a further warning and rebuke. Although primarily addressed to the Pharisees it was spoken in the hearing of the people. All of them were familiar with the vine-clad hills of Southern Judea; every detail of the picture He presented to them was unmistakable. Even now they furnish us with evidence of the picturesque setting of the truth which Jesus conveyed in illustrated form. Remains of old disused wine-presses are scattered over the face of the country. There are vineyards, still the freehold property of householders, surrounded by a wall, or hedge of prickly pear, which exclude such midnight marauders as the fox and wild boar. In the centre a tower stands as a shelter for the watchman to keep away the thieves. Jesus told them how a householder planted a vineyard and built a hedge around it. Having finished his work, he let it to husbandmen on the usual terms of agreement, that a proportion of the produce should be paid as rent. When the time drew near for gathering the grapes, he sent his servants for his share, but they were maltreated and driven away. Other servants were dispatched, but the result was even worse. At last he sent his heir, whom they recognized by his appearance before he reached the vineyard, which afforded them time to conspire against his life, so that they might slay him and take possession of the inheritance for their own use.

Under these extraordinary affronts the patience of the householder was exhausted. Jesus asked what should be done, and

[5] St. Matt. xxi. 28–32. [6] St. Matt. xxi. 33–44.

answered His question by the statement that he will destroy the wicked husbandmen and give the vineyard to others. This terrible indictment of the nation was lost on the populace, but the Pharisees saw the drift of it; they knew what Jesus meant by the vineyard; His parable had an undoubtable reference to the utterance of the prophet Isaiah,[7] and indicated a connection between the advent of the Messiah and the various means God had employed to bring His people into faithful allegiance to His will. In Isaiah the vineyard stands for Israel. The hedge around it represented the care of God for the preservation of His people from the idolatrous nations on their border, and may be seen in the natural boundaries of the country. The Pharisees knew by the servants Jesus meant the prophets of old, who had been sent during the long history of the nation, and they recognized the heir as Himself. He added further a truth from the written word applied to their Messianic King —"The stone which the builders reject, the same is become the head of the corner," fitting exactly with the lesson of the parable. Those to whom the maintenance of the spiritual vineyard was given correspond with the builders of the spiritual temple. Reference was made to the builders to show that, though the malice of the husbandmen destroyed the heir, God's purpose was not frustrated, but completed in the Temple of which His Son was the corner-stone, and that He would take vengeance on the wicked men.[8] This was manifest in His concluding words: "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."[9]

Jesus uttered another warning in the parable[10] of the Marriage of the King's Son, sometimes called the parable of the Wedding Garment, in which there are several parts which have in themselves a separate importance; the wedding garment and the man who did not wear it, the refusal of the invitation

[7] Isa. v. 1–7.
[8] *Notes on the Parables*, by Archbishop Trench.
[9] St. Matt. xxi. 44.
[10] St. Matt. xxii. 2.

by those who made light of it, and others who ill-used the messengers; features which bear a close resemblance to the affront offered in the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen.

Men do not begin their careers by mocking kings. Their disposition has already been directed, and their hearts have become insensible. Being ignorant of the serious things of life and death, they make light of the great and good because they either do not know or will not know.

In the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen our Lord is the Son of the Owner of the vineyard; in this parable He is the King's Son. The difference is emphasized by the demand made in the former and the gift offered in the latter. He is displeased because in the first that which He required was refused; in the second that which He offered was rejected. The extraordinary treatment of the invitation to the Marriage Feast constituted an outrage so monstrous that in the East the offence would be unpardonable. It showed how complete was the antagonism of the offenders to the Governor of the Feast, and their hostility to the King. The obvious method of dealing with the rebels who had maltreated His ambassadors is exhibited in the punishment legitimately inflicted by the armies of a monarch whose representatives had been slain. Thus history became a prophecy, fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem.

The story then turns into other scenes of deeper meaning, when other guests are invited of another class. Hitherto the parable had dealt with the rejection of God's offer to the Jewish people by their rulers and the punishment inflicted; now the offer is made to all sorts and conditions of men, and here a difficulty arises in Western minds. The guests at an Eastern wedding are expected to be suitably attired. If they belong to the circle of acquaintances of the giver of the feast their own festal garments will be sufficient for a seat at the table, but in the event of a great man inviting people unable to provide the necessary clothing they would expect the invitation to carry with it the ability to accept it. The gift of

rich apparel is still a customary offering in the East. Presents of handsome coats are frequently made. And, though it may appear impossible to furnish a large assembly with appropriate dress, no man would be excluded through misfortune. He could not be happy if he were not able to appear in accord with the rest of the guests. Provision would be made for his comfort. Reference to the wedding garment indicates the supply of all that is necessary for enjoyment. The appearance of a guest without a wedding garment exhibits a contempt for the giver of the feast which has been shown by refusing what was offered. He reckoned his ordinary clothing good enough for the company in which he was found and the great personage who had invited him. No greater insult could have been given to the King, and the offender's exclusion from the feast legitimately followed.

There could be no mistake in the minds of the Pharisees about the meaning of the two parables. The lessons they contained plainly disclosed to them the fact that Jesus knew their state of mind. Their hatred of Him He revealed to them in His utterances, and their doom He declared as the natural consequence of their opposition to His mission and their rejection of His message.

Intent on His destruction, the leading spirits of the nation devised a plan by which they felt sure of His fall. The Pharisees and Herodians had contended for years on a most important question, one that had roused a violent antagonism to one another about their duty as the chosen people of God to submit to the heathen yoke of Rome. These old enemies cast aside their differences and united for the common purpose of placing Jesus in a position from whence they thought He could not extricate Himself. In their religious zeal the Pharisees could not imagine a religious Teacher recognizing the authority of a heathen power over God's people; and the Herodians, in the excess of their worldly caution, failed to see how a man could act with prudence without adopting their

attitude. It never occurred to either of them that it was possible to answer the question they had agreed to put to Jesus that would settle the matter for both. Their confidence gave them courage, and the two parties approached Jesus with a most flattering introduction, and said,[11] "Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man; for Thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what thinkest Thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?"

If He answered as the Pharisees expected, by deciding against the payment of tribute, He would then be exposed to the vengeance of the ruling power. The Herodians were equally certain that a reply in their favour would rouse the people against Him. They expected Him to overthrow the alien power and restore their land and nation and were anxiously waiting for His declaration to rise. His submission to Roman authority would mean the abandonment of a great hope, and immediate repudiation of all His claims would follow.

But their cunning plot failed. He said, "Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites? Show Me the tribute money," and they handed Him ("a penny") a Roman denarius [12] bearing the image and superscription of the Emperor Tiberius, TI. CÆSAR DIVI AUG. F. AUGUSTUS PONTIF. MAXIM.

"Whose image and superscription is this?" He said, and they replied "Cæsar's," and, to their great surprise and vexation, Jesus avoided the horns of their dilemma and conveyed to their opposite frames of mind a lesson of universal truth. He told them that the image and superscription clearly showed to whom the tribute was to be paid, and to what authority they owed allegiance. Whether it was heathen or Jewish could not alter the facts of the case, as they had themselves acknowledged. There was the image and superscription of Cæsar on the coin, and to him was due the respect to his authority in spite of his character or system of Government; and to God

[11] St. Matt. xxii. 15–22. [12] The penny, St. Matt. xxii. 19.

something was due: respect to His authority. He said "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's."

The adversaries of Jesus retired utterly baffled by His wisdom. Soon after another set of opponents appeared of a very different type, and on a different errand. They were the Sadducees, who did not believe in a resurrection, and wished to reduce the argument for a future life to absurdity by postulating an extreme case of complex earthly relationships. Nothing could have been gained if they had succeeded in their efforts, popular opinion being against them; but their pretentious air of superiority encouraged them to hope that their case was sufficiently strong to show that the idea of a resurrection was unworthy of serious consideration. The problem they offered for solution propounded a situation not only imaginary but impossible, and might have been cast aside as frivolous. They asked what would happen in the resurrection life to a woman who had successively been the wife of seven brothers. Jesus shattered their scheme by affirming that imperfect human relationships are not perpetuated, but transcended. What is good in them will survive and live on; what is faulty and imperfect will perish. In the Father's House those will meet and eternally associate who are like-minded, that is, have the mind that is in Christ Jesus. He said to the Sadducees, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." [13] Not knowing the power of God, they could not know the possibilities of the future. If they had even known the Scriptures the fact that God had declard Himself the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of the living and not of the dead, they might have been prevented from making the mistake of ignorantly assuming there was no life beyond the tomb. The phrase implied a certain relationship between these men and God, and that rela-

[13] St. Matt. xxii. 29.

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ender therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's

Matthew XXII: 21

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Sc. D. Mastroianni

Lord, dost thou wash my feet

John XIII: 6

tion signified a certain capacity in the patriarchs for communion with God. When the multitude heard what Jesus had to say, and saw that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they were astonished and pleased.

Emboldened by the defeat of their adversaries, the Pharisees made another attempt to discredit our Lord in the eyes of the people, by putting forth a lawyer amongst them to ask a test question:[14] "Which is the first commandment?" Jesus promptly replied in the language of Scripture, "Hear O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength;[15] this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

The answer evidently touched the heart of the questioner whose knowledge of the law had brought him to a better understanding of the inspired Word of God. He saw through the human acts of devotion the reality of God's presence, and declared that to love his God and his neighbour "is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Jesus said unto him, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God." So complete was the answer of Jesus, that the Scribes dare not ask Him any more questions. All their attempts to entangle Him by their artful devices had failed. He emerged from every encounter gloriously triumphant. At last His turn came. He said to the Pharisees, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?"[16] Secure in their idea of the Messiah and their interpretation of the Scriptures, they answered promptly, "The Son of David." "How then," replied Jesus, "doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?" He had no desire to gain an academic advantage over His opponents, but to convince the rulers and the people that

[14] St. Mark xii. 28–34. [15] Deut. vi. 4. [16] St. Matt. xxii. 42.

their idea of the Messiah was altogether wrong. Ever before their minds glowed a picture of the Christ as the Son of David, restoring the ancient glory of their kingdom. So glaringly inconsistent with their hopes had Jesus shown Himself to be, that they would not accept Him. Although He had protested against their dream of worldly greatness both in Galilee and Judea, and had taught His disciples and the people to look for a different dominion than the one which they had expected, the rule of God in the heart of man, and had revealed it in His life, and its power in His works, His last attempt to destroy their false view of the Messianic reign failed. They were put to silence, and dare not ask any more questions; but they would not believe on Jesus as the Messiah.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE GREAT INDICTMENT

On the Wednesday the Scribes and Pharisees were busily engaged in their conspiracy, perfecting their plans for the arrest of Jesus. They had fared badly in their encounters with the Man of Galilee. Incensed at their defeat, they were more determined than ever to find occasion to put Him away. Their secret emissaries flitted to and fro amidst the crowd of people in the Temple courts to ascertain the general state of feeling and the chance of success. How they could attain their object without rousing the people in favour of Jesus perplexed the rulers.

While thus confused help came from an unexpected quarter. The enemies of Jesus never imagined that He would have a traitor amongst His adherents, and one occupying the important position of treasurer. No one can measure the sinister influence of the money-bag. Whatever else may have induced Judas to bargain with the rulers for the betrayal of his Master, there was money in the business; the pay was small, and probably disappointing; but the pay was there, and the price had its place, as in every transaction of a lost soul.

On the side of the Scribes and Pharisees was the advantage gained in the agreement by bartering the last remaining shred of their consciences. Their hearts were hardened; nothing more could be done to turn them from their course of evil. The Christ they sought to destroy had often unveiled their hidden motives and laid bare their inner mood. He had described the rulers as hypocrites,[1] acting a part conscious of

[1] St. Matt. xxiii. 13; ὑποκριταί = hypocrites, used in classical Greek for actors, in Job xxxvi. 13 for one who pretends to have a virtue which he does not possess.

its being a performance for the people to applaud them, even when they were false to their own ideals.

Christ is the eternal foe of falsehood and wrong under whatever pretext their practice is vindicated. He is the faithful and sure witness of truth and righteousness, invincible in goodness, unerring in judgment. He saw the secret deceit of the rulers. He saw that they had compiled an elaborate system of rules for an outward form of religion, and professed to be righteous by an excessive regard for its appearance. Making broad their phylacteries [2] and enlarging the borders of their garments, they were able to enslave their fellow-men for their own advantage, while they indulged their own desires. Their position strengthened their power. They grew pompous, loved titles, the best places at the feasts, the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the market-places. All these miserable conceits of the Scribes and Pharisees Jesus denounced on His arrival in the Temple courts with a vehemence which showed His contempt for unwarrantable pretensions and unworthy distinctions. He said to His disciples, "He that is greatest amongst you shall be your servant. And whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." [3] Jesus taught the absolute equality of mankind in the presence of God, and for the attainment of that equality among men He taught them to sacrifice the desire of the human heart whereby all selfish interests are subordinated to the welfare of one another.

Turning to the Pharisees, He said: "Woe unto you, ye hypocrites, for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against

[2] The phylactery is a small leather case or box fixed by long straps upon the forehead and left arm. The one for the forehead contains four separate compartments made of parchment, each containing a tiny parchment scroll. On these scrolls are inscribed passages from the Pentateuch. The custom of wearing the phylacteries arose from interpreting in a literal sense the command in Deut. vi. 8: "Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." The Pharisees made broad their phylacteries and enlarged the borders of their garments to attract attention.

[3] St. Matt. xxiii. 11, 12; St. Luke xiv. 11.

men, for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." He saw them occupying posts of administration in the religious affairs of the nation, and by their methods of government concealing from the people the eternal principles of truth and justice. He saw the people eager for instruction to save their souls, gathering round the rulers in whose hands lay the safety of the nation, and yet the people were taught that the traditions of men were equal to the laws of God.

He accused the Pharisees of indescribable meanness, of being plunderers of the poor, while they publicly offered up prayers to disguise their corruption. In bitter terms Jesus described their anxiety to obtain even one proselyte and then make him more of a child of hell than themselves. He called them blind fools for their inability to distinguish between the Giver and the gift, the Sanctifier and the thing sanctified. He was no better pleased with their good deeds than their evil ways, because they were not prompted by good motives.[4] Their tithing arose from the wish to keep rules and not the offering of their hearts' desire. He told the Pharisees that their sense of proportion was so deficient that they strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel.[5] So long as their outward appearance was reputable they had no regard for the pollution within them. They were like whited sepulchres, stained to keep men in ignorance of the corruption inside.

His righteous indignation breathed into bitter words of condemnation a defiance which made reconciliation impossible. He closed His denunciation in biting and terrible terms: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"[6]

His death was inevitable as the result of the conflict with the rulers. He might have had peace by agreement with wrong, not in opposition to it; by accepting the rule of the Scribes and Pharisees, not that of the Spirit of Truth. They not only differed from Him, they were radically opposed to

[4] St. Matt. xxiii. 23. [5] St. Matt. xxiii. 24. [6] St. Matt. xxiii. 33.

Him. He knew He must die because He was not willing to do what His enemies wished Him to do; and He was prepared to sacrifice Himself, for truth to prevail, for reighteousness to be established.

The obstinacy of the people weighed on His soul; the doom of their city filled Him with sorrow. With pathetic lamentation He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" [7]

As He was passing out of the Temple He saw, amongst the rich men ostentatiously offering their gifts in the treasury, a poor widow who gave two of the smallest coins in circulation, all she possessed.[8] Her self-denial touched the heart of Jesus. He drew His disciples' attention to the widow's offering, and declared it to be the very essence of devotion, and of greater value than all the contributions of the men of wealth.

Again at eventide Jesus left the city and sat with His disciples on the Mount of Olives. As they gazed on the magnificent scene before them, the disciples drew the attention of their Master to the glorious spectacle. In the afterglow of the setting sun, its brilliant colouring lit up the Temple buildings with a roseate light, and suffused with a radiance of incomparable beauty the sculptured marbles of the majestic structures within the city walls. He looked on them, and spoke in the most solemn and affecting terms of the utter destruction of the noble pile of buildings. Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately when this dreadful catastrophe would occur. He then delivered His discourse on the two great events of the future, the last stage of their nation's history and the second coming of their Lord. Looking across the valley in the deepening gloom of the Syrian day, He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem. The impending doom of the city of their fathers was plain to behold in the signs of the times, but so engrossed were the people in the pursuit of selfish aims

[7] St. Matt. xxiii. 37.

[8] St. Luke xxi. 1–4.

that they saw none of the portents of disaster. Its cup of iniquity would soon be full, and its people ripe for judgment. The sporadic outbursts of national desire for independence, appearing first in one quarter then in another, caused the Roman authority to tighten its hold on the land of Israel. Gradually the Roman legions were gathering to support the Roman dominion. As it grew in strength the hope of the people waned, until the turbulent population, smarting under the yoke of Imperial Rome, burst its bonds in one great and unavailing effort to be free. Jesus saw the trend of events; He marked the course of wickedness and folly; and in solemn and awful words He described the last days of the beleaguered city and its terrible fate. He pictured the gathering armies, the flight of the inhabitants, the wreck and ruin of the Jewish metropolis. He warned His disciples of the calamities which would come upon them.[9] A grim and terrible future He portrayed, and told His disciples that they were not to fear. When they were in need, support would be given them.

Of the fall of Jerusalem He spoke with such definiteness that they might easily know the time was approaching, but the end of time when He should come again was hidden in the Father's knowledge.[10] He said life would continue as in the days of Noah and of Lot. He gave several familiar illustrations for directing flight in the sudden alarm of destruction. The man on the housetop would not have time even to descend and take away his goods; he had better flee by jumping from one housetop to another to a place of safety outside the city.[11] Of two men in one bed,[12] one would be taken and the other left; of two women grinding at the mill, one would be taken and the other left.

Wherever a nation is dead in sin, destruction comes upon it. The vulture being the symbol of destruction, Jesus said,

[9] St. Luke xxi. 6. [10] St. Matt. xxiv. 36. [11] St. Matt. xxiv. 17.

[12] The bed referred to is the *mustabeh*, or ledge on the back and sides of the *lewan*, used as a couch by day (modern Turkish divan) and resting-place for guests at night.

"Wheresoever the carcase is, thither will the vultures be gathered together." Before that awful day He said He must suffer many things and be rejected.

He urged His disciples to trust in the government of God during the absence of their Lord, and seek support and encouragement in prayer. If a judge, to whom nothing is sacred, does what is right towards a persevering widow, simply to get rid of her pleading, they could rest assured of the justice of God. "Nevertheless," said He, "when the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" [13] Looking onward to a more distant future, another scene came before Him, of the last days, when He would come again; of this Second Advent no idea of the date was given. His disciples had not yet realized the full meaning of the coming of the Kingdom. Eyes straining after visions of temporal splendour missed the signs of its appearing. When they had reached the distant greatness of its spiritual glory, they would turn to the past behind them, to the days when the Son of Man was with them, and see what they had failed to appreciate. Jesus warned them against the feverishness and restlessness of the time when the world, expectant of His Second Advent, would turn first in one direction and then in another after false Messiahs. They were to walk by faith and not by sight, and watch continually. To enforce this lesson for all His disciples at all times He spoke two parables, of the Ten Virgins and the Talents, which contain the essence of the teaching of the Second Coming of our Lord. Watching is the key-note of the parable of the Ten Virgins, and working the precept of the parable of the Talents.[14]

Eastern weddings of today help us to realize the uncertainty of the time for the coming of the bridegroom. Invitations are issued at a village wedding with a freedom unknown in the West. If a man has not received an invitation, and is suitably attired and prepared to give a present, he is admitted to the supper. After the procession, when the bride is brought

[13] St. Luke xviii. 8. [14] St. Matt. xxv. 1–30.

from her father's house to her future home, the village maidens assemble with her to keep their feast. After various pastimes in the field, all the men gather in the evening for supper on the threshing-floor, and the bridegroom sits on a raised platform to view his guests. Meanwhile, the maidens wait with the bride for his appearing. Each brings her lamp with a little vessel containing oil to replenish the oil on which the little wick that gives the light is floating. All the lamps are necessary to illuminate the dwelling, and much oil in little vessels is required for the time of waiting. None can tell when the bridegroom will come; he tarries until all his guests are fed, and when they are many he is often late. As he cannot ascertain their number, he does not know when the supper is ended until the governor informs him that all is finished. He rises from his seat, the band begins to play, and the women waiting with the bride, hearing the noise, go out to meet him with their lamps trimmed. The lamps are so small that the oil in them soon runs out, and prudent maidens prepare for the period of waiting. In the parable five of the maidens were wise and five were foolish. The latter carried no oil in their vessels. They had everything except oil, and when their light was going out the lamps were useless, so they asked for a share of the provision made by the wise, but none was given to them. Each must depend on her own resources and provision for the time of waiting.

In the parable of the Talents Jesus said the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man about to travel in a far country, who, before he commenced his journey, called unto him three servants and gave, according to their several ability, one five talents, one two, and the last one talent. He charged them to trade with the money, then took his departure. On his return he called the men to give an account of their venture. The first and second had done well and were suitably rewarded, the third, apparently dissatisfied with his capital, and disloyal to his master, neglected to use the means he had received to do the work he was expected to perform, and hid the talent in

the earth after the fashion of the day. Excuses for his indifference and his failure were unavailing, and punishment followed. Every man is expected to be faithful to the trust committed unto him, and to act according to the knowledge imparted to him, whether it be great or small.

Jesus described the Last Judgment in a vivid picture of the gathering of the nations, a scene from Joel iii. which has left such an indelible impression on Eastern minds that Eastern men have set with dramatic force the place for the great tribunal where Jesus declared His view of the notable event.

The valley of the Kedron beneath His feet, separating the city of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, has since been regarded as the site for the spectacle of the Last Assize. In due preparation for it, Moslems bury their dead on the west of the valley, and pious Jews are laid on the opposite slope. They are all more concerned about the site than the character of the judgment.

The distinguishing feature of the assembly, the parting asunder of the vast concourse of people as a shepherd removes his sheep from the goats, setting the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left,[15] has never been forgotten; it is the basis of His judgment, the test of character that escapes attention, hence the surprise of those who were mustered in their respective positions. Some of them were even startled by the statement of the Judge. As He called those on His right hand He said, "Come, ye blessed children of My Father, inherit the kingdoms prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me." [16]

One of the number, as spokesman for the rest, perplexed by this announcement, and, too honest to remain in the position assigned to himself and his companions without explana-

[15] St. Matt. xxv. 33–36.

[16] St. Matt. xxv. 34–36.

tion, said: "Lord, when saw we Thee hungred, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? when saw we Thee a Stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee?" [17] He assumed there must be a mistake, as he could not remember the particular acts of kindness enumerated, and credited to himself and his associates.

There is more in a man's acts than he is aware of; their origin is deeper and they reach further than he thinks. Neither the good nor the evil in them has its source in the scope of the will; both have occupied the dim and unknown background on the surface of which life works itself out; both move under the pressure of loftier and deeper agents than the man himself; but he uses them, or they use him, to direct the course of his life, and the actions which issue instinctively from it exhibit the kind of spirit that is in him, his true character. They are so much a part of his real self that he thinks no more of them than he thinks of breathing, and he does not inform his friends that he breathes, nor does he speak about his courage if he is brave. By these works he is judged, not justified by them; by the collective character of his life he is judged, not by individual acts.

If in the life there is a spirit manifesting God that He might be distinctly felt by others, that life is the Christ life [18] looking out on the world of men, touching other human life, taking hold of it, and repeating itself upon it. As Christ identified Himself with man by the assumption of human nature to serve mankind, those who possess His spirit are naturally, though it may be to some extent unconsciously, engaged in the same service. They lose themselves in the life they live for others, and on that great day when the account is taken, and the good or ill unreckoned by themselves appears, he that lost his life shall find it.

The life that has been centred in self to secure its own profit, though it may have been occasionally interrupted by

[17] St. Matt. xxv. 37–39. [18] *Cf.* p. 137.

deeds of kindness — for every one is influenced at odd times by the pressure of the good around him — the life which self endeavoured to save for self will be lost.

The crowd on the left hand said: "When saw we Thee an hungred, or athirst, or a Stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee?" [19] Then shall He answer them, saying: "Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of My brethren, ye did it not to Me."

Ignorance of God's will indicates the absence of His Spirit. Indifference to man's need exhibits the presence of self, and leads only in one direction that ends in loss. Where else could it end? "Whosoever shall seek it to save his life shall lose it." [20]

The blind Pharisee, satisfied with himself, never perceived the effect of his character on the people round him; he failed even to see its effect on himself, and the more Jesus talked to him and his fellow rulers the more they resented His sayings. His indictment of the rulers stands for all times, and His description of the Last Judgment represents the inevitable result of human experience.

[19] St. Matt. xxv. 44–45. [20] St. Luke xvii. 33.

CHAPTER XXXIX

"THE NIGHT IN WHICH HE WAS BETRAYED"

JESUS spent the early part of Thursday in quiet preparation for the great tragedy. He knew that evil men had plotted to seize Him; He knew also that His disciple Judas had bargained with them to deliver into their hands his Master; the traitor only waited for the opportunity.

The precautions taken by our Lord to secure freedom from arrest until the last supper was over and His final words were uttered indicate quite clearly that He knew what was before Him. He evidently attached great importance to the feast and the occasion it furnished for His last discourse, as He had already arranged with a friend for the use of a room.

He sent two of His disciples into the city and told them to follow a man they would see bearing a pitcher of water. Such an unusual sight could not well be missed, and the mistake made of following the wrong person. Bearing a pitcher is a woman's work; an exception would only be found when a rich man employed his slave. The unnamed friend of Jesus was evidently a man of wealth and position. It may be reasonably assumed that he was also a secret disciple, one to whom Jesus could appeal, on whom He could rely, and who was ready to answer the call of his dying Lord. The disciples sent on the last errand were told to ask the goodman of the house for the guestchamber [1] in which the Master could eat the Passover with His disciples. He used the same word [2] for guestchamber as that which described the place of His birth, a temporary abiding-place for travelling men, and the unknown friend of Jesus gave Him the upper room (the *aleyieh*) reserved for those whose hearts beat in sympathy with his own,

[1] St. Mark xiv. 13–16.

[2] κατάλυμα = place of reception for travellers.

a large room built over the apartments at the side of the courtyard with bare, arched whitewashed walls. In it were few articles of luxury besides the rich soft carpets on the floor, cushions for reclining at the low table standing in the centre, and a ewer and basin and towel, the requisites for comfort. The door which opened on to the terrace that formed part of the roof of the lower dwelling-places led down a flight of steps into the courtyard. From the courtyard below, the scent of flowers floated on the evening breeze into the guestchamber, filling it with a sweet perfume.

Having found the room, the trustworthy disciples completed their preparations. The lamb, the wine, the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs and the *kharoseth* — a dish of thick sauce made of figs, dates, raisins, and vinegar — were procured. Everything being ready, towards evening Jesus with the Twelve passed through the streets into the courtyard, mounted the stone steps, and entered the guestchamber. Oblivious of the solemn crisis approaching, the disciples openly contended with one another for precedence.[3] Not one of them thought of the humble duty he might perform for the rest to enjoy more comfortably the meal prepared by attending to the customary washing of the feet. They settled in their places while their Master noticed, in painful silence, their striving for the chief seats. He determined to teach them a lesson that should endure for all time. Rising from the supper, He laid aside His outer garment, girded Himself with a towel, and, taking the ewer and basin, He approached His disciples. He, their Lord and Master, became the slave to serve them and, began to wash their feet. Silent with amazement, all accepted His ministration until Jesus came to Peter, whose feelings burst into an exclamation, and he said, "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" [4] Jesus answered, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Peter, again affectionately protesting, said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." But Jesus answered, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me,"

[3] St. Luke xxii. 24.

[4] St. John xiii. 6.

revealing the danger to His disciples that lay hidden in the wilfulness of men. Only one will can prevail in the follower of Jesus, the will of his Lord. The impetuous and warm-hearted disciple, fearing exclusion, instantly changed his mind, and said, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Again Jesus impressed on Peter the importance of complete submission, saying, "He that is washed [5] needeth not save to wash [6] his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all." The last words alluded to Judas, whose feet had been washed, while his heart remained foul with a traitor's bargain.

As soon as Jesus had resumed His place at the table He explained the significant meaning of His act. He said, "Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Master and Lord, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." [7]

Before the actual eating of the Lamb, the Passover proper, the ceremony consisted of various introductory forms, beginning with a discourse on the object of the meeting, the first cup of wine was drunk, and the one who conducted the ceremony took the bitter herbs in his hand and said, "These are the herbs we eat because the Lord passed over our houses in Egypt." Probably at this stage, when our Lord took the bitter herbs, His soul being troubled by the bitterness of treachery, He startled His disciples by saying, "One of you shall betray Me." [8] A shadow fell on that happy gathering; "the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom He spake." Next to Jesus, and leaning on His bosom, was John, to whom Simon Peter beckoned for him to ask their Lord.[9]

[5] St. John xiii. 10.

[6] Washed, *i.e.* λελουμένος, means bathed as opposed to wash, *i.e.* νίψασθαι. The one who has bathed, after he reaches his home, needs only his feet cleansed from the dust of the road. Bathing represents the new birth; the foot-washing, the daily cleansing from daily pollution of sin.

[7] St. John xiii. 13. [8] St. John xiii. 21. [9] St. John xiii. 23–26.

And Jesus answered, "He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it; and when He had dipped the sop He gave it to Judas Iscariot." He had watched the progress of the traitor's sin; He saw it growing by the shifty movement of his eyes, the gloomy silence of his tongue. But Jesus never ceased His attention to Judas; His patience continued, His grace flowed on. When the hand of the false disciple dipped in the same dish, his Master gave him the sop that declared His unfailing love, and His desire to stem the course of sin. Jesus had chosen the man of Kerioth for a great work, designed for him a great position, and bestowed on him a great affection. For a man so trusted and so beloved there could be no greater wrong, no darker deed, than the treacherous act which Judas had agreed to perform. St. Paul marks the contract between the Saviour's love and the traitor's design in the words he uses in his letter to the Corinthians: "The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks He brake it." [10]

After the sop Satan entered into Judas.[11] Then said Jesus, "That thou doest, do quickly." False alike to truth and trust, he went immediately out; and it was night. Inside was light and the richest fellowship the world had known. Outside in the darkness of the shadow of the silent street Judas passed of his own dark will, with his own black heart, for the committal of the act he had devised, which has for ever marked the depth of infamy. He hurried on to meet the Jewish priests and march with the Roman soldiers to arrest his Lord. Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." [12]

With Judas passed the shadow over the feast and the hindrance to the complete fellowship within the upper room. Free from his evil presence, Jesus opened His heart to His disciples.

The dipping of the sop occurred during the eating of the Passover. While the disciples remained at the table the last supper was instituted. Its significance does not entirely rest

[10] 1 Cor. xi. 23. [11] St. John xiii. 27. [12] St. John xiii. 31.

on its association with the Passover Feast, although the memorial of the redemption of Israel was uppermost in the disciples' minds. Other meanings are attached to the ordinance, which are more fully revealed the more intimately they are considered. In the light of greater knowledge the disciples would see how appropriately on that fateful night was instituted the memorial of a deliverance from a bondage greater than the Egyptian, and from a deadlier peril of a more awful death.

The idea of federal relationship is conveyed by the solemn rite. As the old covenant was ratified with the blood of sacrifice, which they commemorated, Jesus ordained a new covenant through His blood, which He confirmed in another act which represented another sacrifice. He said, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." [13] And as "the blood of the lamb is the procuring cause of salvation, the flesh of the lamb is the sustaining power of the life that is saved." [14]

It has also an interpretation which is based on the institution of the common meal for mankind, constituting a sacred and indissoluble bond of union in the brotherhood of man.

If in the desert we could watch a fugitive in his need seeking food or sanctuary, a man perhaps whose hand is stained with blood, or a poor wandering Bedawy without a home, we should see him eagerly look in every direction, and run or ride to the camp of the greatest chief. The greater the chief, the more sure is the refuge. As he stands at the entrance in his loneliness, his isolation, and his weariness, he is welcomed into a warm and comforable fellowship with the words, "Peace be unto you." After the word of peace has been given the pledge of peace is offered in the food supplied. No questions are asked. The stranger has come because he is in need; that accounts for his appearance. He is called "Thaiff Allah," *i.e.* the guest of God, and the partaking of the "bread and

[13] St. Matt. xxvi. 28; St. Mark xiv. 24.

[14] *The Shadow and the Substance,* p. 49, by Sir Arthur Blackwood.

salt," the breaking of the bread in the lone wilderness, is the sign of fellowship. And so long as the recipient remains in the company of his host he is identified with him, subject to his patriarchal rule, and the object of his paternal care; but if he leaves "the fellowship" [15] he must face the perils of the wilderness again.

This is not the custom of a particular tribe; it is the common law of the desert. What a man needs most is there provided in the fullest measure by the table in the wilderness. It is the central fact of desert life; it is the only hope of a desert soul. From generation to generation this tribute to God's care for all in need has been offered in the most profound belief and experience in its efficacy. The desert fugitive is often fleeing before the avenger of blood, he is trying to escape from his enemy, and the table in the wilderness offers not merely the food, but the safety it bestows in the followship which the food implies. The faith of the suppliant appropriates the fact of safety by his inward spirit as he receives the outward sign of it with his hands. He is assured of it by the experience which follows; and the testimony of experience is the witness of the truth.

We need not marvel that it has become the type and symbol of God's great provision for the world's need, that there should be a table in the wilderness of life for all people. Ever since our Lord brake the bread and gave it to His disciples in the upper room the table has been spread for the guests of God. Sometimes the central truth has been obscured by ceremonial magnificence; at other times its reality has been ignored; but in all ages of Christian history it has been the great witness of the fact of Christ, and the great memorial of His death. "It is not His life perfectly holy, not His words luminous with Divine wisdom," not His miracles of Divine compassion, He would have us commemorate, but His death; His body broken, and His blood shed for man. "And He took bread, and gave thanks and brake it, and gave unto them saying, This is My

[15] See pages 132 and 133.

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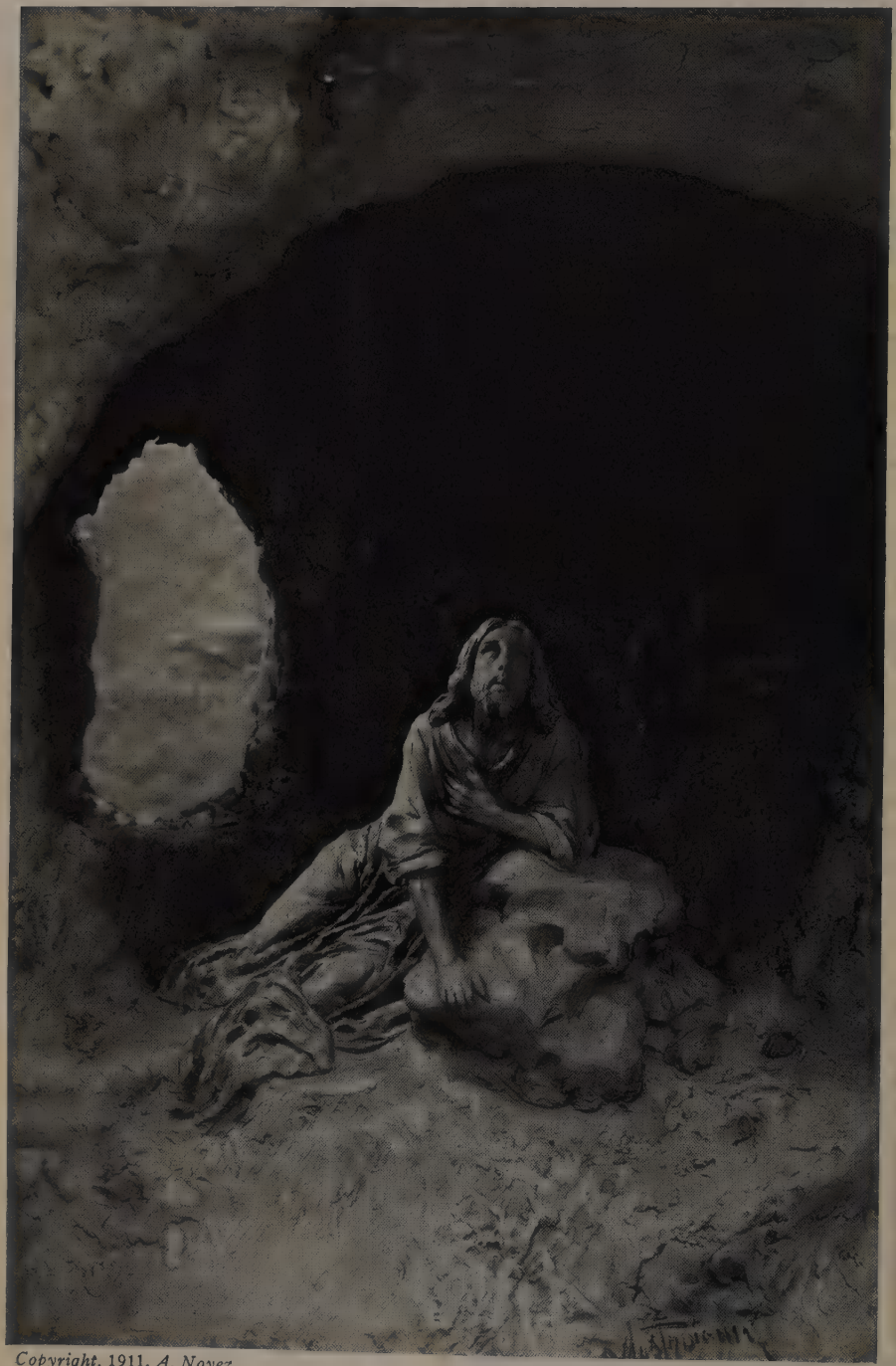
This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you

Luke XXII: 20



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Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done

Luke XXII: 42

body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you." [16] The breaking of the bread was a natural symbol of the breaking of the body of Jesus; the pouring out of the red wine of the country was a natural symbol of the pouring out of His blood. Reference to eating His flesh and drinking His blood had been made before in the synagogue of Capernaum, as a sign of the reception of the life Divine.[17]

After the institution of the great memorial, the symbol and pledge of continued fellowship, Jesus delivered His last discourse to the Apostles. Beginning in the familiar style of a father, He told them He was about to leave them. "Little children," He said, "yet a little while I am with you." [18] "A new commandment I give unto you"— the commandment of the new covenant, the sign of the new communion —"that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall men know ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." This new commandment of love, with the binding force of Christ's continual presence, and with His example always before them, was the necessary prelude to His departure. When he spoke of it they could not believe Him. Peter, alarmed, said, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" [19] Jesus explained the sense of His words, and intimated that, though Peter would not be able to follow Him immediately, at a later period ability would be given to him. Ever impetuous and self-confident, Peter asked why he could not follow, and declared, "I will lay down my life for Thy sake." In reply to this rash assertion Jesus predicted the disciple's threefold denial, and said, "This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice." [20]

Parts of the conversation in the upper room were recorded by the Synoptists respecting the future conduct of the dis-

[16] St. Luke xxii. 19, 20. [17] See page 245.

[18] St. John xiii. 33–35. "Children" in the sense of "lads" is the usual form in which the sheikh in the desert addresses the men of his tribe.

[19] St. John xiii. 36–38. [20] St. Matt. xxvi. 34.

ciples in their relation to the people, and St. Matthew incorporates some of the remarks in the charge [21] to the Twelve when they were sent on their first mission. But the most sublime utterances of Jesus on this last evening of His earthly life have been preserved by St. John. They throb with the most tender emotions. Having heard the announcement of His approaching departure, the disciples were unutterably sad. Jesus looked on their downcast faces and delivered His message of comfort, which in every age has brought with it strength and consolation to anxious souls. He said,[22] "Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; [23] if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." In the eternal resting-places there was room for all, and His departure would be to prepare for them to follow Him. Their capacity for understanding being limited, He patiently listened to their remarks and answered their questions. He had told them that they knew both the place where He was going and the way to it. But Thomas said, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" He replied, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father but by Me." "If ye had known Me ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him. and have seen Him."

Philip recognized in the homesickness of his soul, in the call of his human spirit for its completion, the inadequacy of his knowledge, and boldly suggested a solution of his difficulty by asking for a vision of the Father. Jesus was grieved. Apparently He had lived His life in vain when in Himself the disciples failed to see the likeness of the Father. Again He impressed upon their dull minds the fact that the Father had manifested Himself in the words they had heard and the works they had seen, and that whoever had by his spiritual vision

[21] St. Matt. x. 16–20. [22] St. John xiv. 1, etc.

[23] μονή, *mansio*, "station," a place of abode, a resting-place for the night; also in verse 23.

perceived the power of God in Him had seen the Father. But these manifestations of God were not to remain mere external exhibitions. Through faith in Him and fellowship with Him the disciples were to continue the Divine work He had begun. He promised them that, when the limited form of His manifestation on which they had depended had gone, a new Advocate with Divine power would come and work in them, and that through communion with the Divine life they would do yet greater things. A new relationship with Him was to be established by prayer in His Name, that through His mediation the Father would send another Person [24] to help them, even the Spirit of Truth, Who would never leave them, as He was about to do. He called Him the Spirit of Truth, because union with the Holy Spirit can only be obtained by embracing truth as an irresistible conviction dominating the life and inspiring the soul. Only the spirit of truth can perceive and appropriate and assimilate truth. If we substitute the word "reality" for truth we shall be able to understand its meaning more exactly. To talk of truth in the sense of speaking truly, of telling the truth, is very different from the essential idea of reality. "Speaking the truth implies a correspondence between words and thoughts; truth is a correspondence between thoughts and realities."

Truth lies in character, and Jesus told the disciples that the world could not receive the Spirit of Truth because the Spirit is foreign to the character of the world; but they would know the truth in the only way in which it could be known, by an inward and personal experience of the Holy Spirit. He said, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." [25] Jesus thus prepared them to expect Him to return to them in the Spirit Who is One with Him and with the Father, as an indwelling Power. Speaking of Himself as He had spoken of the Holy Spirit, He said, "I will not leave you comfortless (*i.e.* orphans [26]): I will come to you." [27] The office of the

[24] St. John xiv. 16, *παράκλητος*, Comforter, Advocte. [25] St. John xiv. 17.
[26] *ὀρφανούς*, orphans, as in marginal reference. [27] St. John xiv. 18.

Advocate, as the Comforter, is to unite the disciples with the Father; if, therefore, the disciples were without the Holy Spirit they would be fatherless. But if they loved Him they would keep His commandments, and in the keeping of His commandments they would enjoy His spiritual fellowship. These statements so perplexed the disciples that, with the hope still in them of a public manifestation, Judas (not Iscariot) asked why He would make Himself known only to them and not to the world; but He offered no further explanation; He simply repeated His former declaration, that only to those who were spiritually susceptible of receiving Him by a faithful observance of the Father's will would the spiritual manifestation be made. "If a man love Me he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him." [28] He told them that the Holy Ghost would bring to their remembrance all He had said to them, and furnish them with the means of rightly understanding all He had taught them. As they were about to rise from the table He pronounced His final blessing; He gave his last bequest of peace.[29] They sang the Passover Psalm, and He called them to go with Him to the last conflict. From the upper room the disciples passed with their Lord into the silent street, onward to the city gate, and through it down the hill to the olive groves and vineyards on the slopes of Olivet. Further delay in the place where Judas knew his Master abode might mean a violent interruption of their meeting before He had finished His discourse.

Many thoughts laboured in His Mind to come forth, and strong feelings of affection swelled within His soul for the men who had steadfastly relied upon Him. He called their attention to the vine [30] and its branches in order to teach them that the relation between them was to remain no longer by external dependence on Him, but through an internal experience of His Spirit. Their business was to bear fruit, they were to become active agents of the Kingdom; but only through

[28] St. John xiv. 23. [29] St. John xiv. 27. [30] St. John xv. 1.

a vital union of fellowship with Him could they exhibit the Divine life in fruitful works. He said, "I am the Vine, and ye are the branches." He continued His discourse and talked of the plan of salvation through His abiding presence and their love for Him and for one another. Such love were they to show that He had manifested, even unto death. He addressed them by the familiar title of "friends," and informed them of the world's hatred and predicted worldly persecutions.

They were full of sorrow. Whichever way they looked at His impending departure there would be a lost Leader and a lost cause, for surely all things would come to an end with His disappearance. His declaration that it was expedient that He should go away seemed incredible, the prospect of His departure alarming; and His words a contradiction. How could anything be better than the visible presence of the Master, to walk with Him, hear His gracious words, witness His loving deeds, and feel His benign influence?

There is, however, a period of tutelage which must come to an end, and the pupil pass out of the class into the world. That time had arrived for the disciples. The absence of their Teacher would mean to them the presence of His Spirit within them. Christ in the Spirit would be more to them than Christ after the flesh. He said if He did not go the Holy Spirit would not come. For their benefit He must leave them, and in His stead His Spirit would come to achieve the great purpose of His life through them. He described the process of the Holy Spirit's action in regenerating the world, and gave them a brief history of the silent progress of the spiritual life in the words, "When He is come He will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment"— that is, bring home sin to man's judgment to render all denial impossible, and to a man's conscience to make evasion impracticable. The Spirit of God would work for righteousness by revealing His character. He said, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.[31] Howbeit, when the Spirit of

[31] St. John xvi. 12.

Truth is come He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you."

The Holy Spirit would enable men rightly to appreciate and justly estimate the character of His life and Person.[32] There were powerful men in high places, wielding immense influence, who, having compassed the death of Jesus, would seek to destroy His reputation, extinguish His work, and blot out His Name from the annals of time. He had given great offence to the rulers; that alone was sufficient cause to obliterate His Name and work. Then there was the decay of memory. We all know how soon we forget the people we have met, how transitory is the influence of the men of the day, how quickly attention is absorbed by new interests, how soon fading memory causes the past to recede into the dim distance and fresh things become prominent. There is the perilous activity of fancy, which might substitute for facts opinions and views that are created by the enthusiasm of the moment. The influence of a man that has gone depends greatly on the moods and manners of his followers. We need only think of great historical characters to understand that many who once occupied the public mind are now lost in oblivion. Their memory is but a name, their influence forgotten, or their acts distorted beyond recognition. That the disciples, so dull of comprehension of the mystery of the words and works of Jesus, should have been able to record them, and that we should be able to perceive in them a Divine authority which moves men's hearts to believe them, is evidence of the fulfilment of the promise made by Jesus that after He had gone the Holy Ghost would come and exhibit His life and work for the welfare of mankind.

The coming of the Holy Spirit after the departure of Jesus was the basis of the new communion with the Father. He

[32] Canon Liddon, *Sermon on St. John* xvi. 14, "The Inspiration of Selection,

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And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him

Matthew XXVI: 49

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Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him

Matthew XXVI: 50

told them that for a time they would be sorrowful, but their temporary sorrow would be turned into permanent joy. He wished to impart to them a measure of Divine comfort in a hostile world, and closed His farewell address in a few words which embraced the whole of His purpose. "These things I have spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." [33] With this note of triumph Jesus concluded His address to His disciples, and then He offered His parting prayer. As the great High Priest He lifted up His eyes to heaven in a prayer of self-consecration, thanksgiving, and intercession. He prayed for Himself, for His disciples, for all believers that they may be one, that they may be glorified for their abiding in the union of love and the perfection of Divine knowledge. As He prayed the end was near, and according to the world's judgment the end exhibited the disastrous failure of all His work. Yet He spoke like a conqueror. Standing with His little band of disciples, His eyes turned to heaven, He declared to God the Father, "I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me." [34]

It was now very late, and the disciples were very weary. Jesus told them to sit down, and He, with Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, went into the dim recesses of the olive-trees, where He told them to watch with Him; and there began in dark Gethsemane His passion for the souls of men. Enduring unutterable agony, He prayed with the sweat of blood upon His brow and the burden of the world's sin on His soul. Worn with the day's anxieties, His disciples slept; and He sorrowed for human sympathy. When most He needed them they failed. His voice reached their ears, they heard a few of His words as they floated on the night air towards them, but they could not keep awake. He came and found them sleeping. Gently rebuking them, He told them to watch and pray, that they might not enter into temptation, and, seeing their

[33] St. John xvi. 33. [34] St. John xvii. 4, 5.

weakness, He remarked, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again He came and found them asleep, and at last He said: "Behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." [35]

[35] St. Matt. xxvi. 36–45.

CHAPTER XL

THE TRIAL OF JESUS

THE glint of the moonbeams shining through the olive-trees of dark Gethsemane lifted some of the glood, but a solemn silence reigned in the garden of sorrow. It was broken by the tumult of the crowd accompanying the soldiers led by the treacherous disciple. Attracted by the noise, Jesus left the shadowed recesses by a narrow path to meet them, and Judas met and kissed his Master. He had said, "Whomsoever I shall kiss that same is He, take Him and lead Him away safely." [1] His Master said unto him, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" and the wretched man stepped aside as the crowd pressed on. Jesus asked, "Whom seek ye?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." He said, "I am He." "As soon as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground." [2] The supreme crisis through which He had passed in the garden had set up heroic proportions in Him; His purpose was fixed, He was ready to die. Unaware of the greatness of the One they had come to arrest, they were overwhelmed by His Divine Majesty. He offered Himself to them, or they would have failed in the duty they were sent to perform.

"They which were about Him said, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" [3] and Peter immediately drew his weapon and struck off the ear of Malchus, the High Priest's servant.[4] Jesus said, "Put up thy sword in its place; for they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions [5] of angels?" [6] And while He spake He thought of the injured man and healed him. Then,

[1] St. Mark xiv. 44. [2] St. John xviii. 6. [3] St. Luke xxii. 49.
[4] St. John xviii. 10. [5] A legion was 6,000. [6] St. Matt. xxvi. 52, 53.

submitting Himself to the officers, He was instantly seized and bound. Seeing Him thus helpless in the rough hands of His captors, the menacing attitude of the mob, and the insolent bearing of the soldiers, the disciples were frightened, and all forsook Him and fled. Stunned by physical fear and mental anguish, they scarcely knew what they were doing. Two of them, recovering their balance, followed the crowd at a distance up the hill towards the city and the High Priests' Palace. One boldly passed into the courtyard and ushered in behind him his shrinking champion Peter, who stood near the brazier warming his hands to remove the chilly feeling at his heart and compose his troubled spirit.

As no meeting of the Sanhedrin could be summoned at that late hour of the night, Jesus was taken bound to be examined by Annas,[7] the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who had been the High Priest and still retained the title. He questioned Jesus about His followers and His doctrine, anxious no doubt to prepare a charge on which the Man of Nazareth might be condemned. His assumption of authority at such time was as illegal as his position, and the answer he received, though delivered in calm and quiet tones, contained a reproof which no one could misunderstand. In contrast to this secret tribunal Jesus said,[8] "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the Temple whither the Jews always resort: and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou Me? Ask them which heard Me, what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said." Evidently the rebuke struck home, and those who were present winced at the allusion to the likely witnesses. One of the officers which stood by struck Jesus, saying, "Answerest Thou the High Priest so?" Jesus said, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou Me?"

While these proceedings were being conducted in the raised apartment (the *lewan*) at the end of the courtyard, near which John stood to listen to the examination, Peter remained with

[7] St. John xviii. 13.

[8] St. John xviii. 20, etc.

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Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man

Matthew XXVI: 74

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I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ

Matthew XXVI: 63

the group round the fire in the court below.[9] Unable to hear at this distance, they waited for the result. A young woman in the crowd, accustomed to scenes of public interest, unashamed to stand among a rabble in a public place, with brazen face gazed on the shrinking form of the simple Galilean fisherman and recognized him as a disciple of the Man of Nazareth. She immediately challenged him, and the poor man, overwhelmed by his position and the startling incidents through which he was passing, denied his Lord. Thrice he denied Him, and, as if he were conscious of his weakness, he turned to the Master on the upper floor at the other end of the courtyard, and Jesus, standing there, turned and looked on Peter. Their eyes met, and Peter saw in the look of Jesus His great love for weak and sinful men. The solicitude in His eyes, the tenderness of His gaze, penetrated the soul of the weak disciple; his heart was broken; he rushed from the place in tears. And the cock crew.

From Annas Jesus was taken to Caiaphas, the High Priest and President of the Sanhedrin. In his palace the second stage of the trial took place, where a few of the more desperate enemies of Jesus had been hastily summoned. All His acts of which the rulers had so often complained and which we might have expected would be laid to His charge, such as the violation of their Sabbath laws, the neglect of their traditional observances, and the cleansing of the Temple, were studiously avoided.

The Sanhedrin sought false witnesses against Jesus to put Him to death. This does not mean that messengers were sent through the streets to summon men to give evidence. False witnesses seem to have been always the necessary appendage of judicial proceedings in the changeless East. False witnesses may be found today in the corridors of an Oriental courthouse waiting to be hired, ready to perjure themselves at a price. And the price is not always paid in cash; it depends

[9] ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ κάτω (St. Mark xiv. 66) = "In the court below": the outer court (*koosh*) open to the sky, where the charcoal fire was burning, below the *lewan*.

on the position of the man in need of help. The favour of the great is enough to gain the response of willing men when the call for witnesses is heard. Two men came forward to support the Sanhedrin against Jesus. They said they had heard Him say something about destroying the Temple and rebuilding it in three days. His words were distorted to suit the president of the court, but the false witnesses disagreed on their own statements. Apparently their evidence was rejected.

Details of the trial are meagre. The Evangelists, in their condensed report, do not appear to have been interested in all that passed. The most important part, however, has been preserved, the climax which the proceedings reached, when Jesus, the Accused, stood silently watching the various attempts of His enemies to convict Him. His serene composure provoked Caiaphas. Angrily rising from his seat, the High Priest advanced into the circle of his associates, confronted the Prisoner, and exclaimed, "Answerest Thou nothing?" But His silence remained unbroken, and His attitude remained unmoved.

In despair and fury Caiaphas cried, "I adjure Thee by the living God that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God." [10]

He could no longer remain silent under so solemn a charge without being misunderstood. And Jesus said, "I am." [11]

In order that no doubt might rest on His affirmation, He added, by way of emphasis, a quotation from the book of Daniel, which the High Priest and all the Sanhedrin accepted, as a Messianic prophecy: "And ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." [12]

[10] St. Matt. xxvi. 63. [11] St. Mark xiv. 62.

[12] St. Mark xiv. 62; Dan. vii. 13. This quotation is usually regarded as the prophecy of our Lord respecting His Second Advent rather than a statement of His Messiahship. St. Mark does not use the words ἀπ' ἄρτι of St. Matthew xxvi. 64, "from now," "from this time" (A. V. "Hereafter," R. V. "henceforth"). These words "from now" referred to that time, and there followed from that time, as Jesus declared, the evidence of His Divine power in the judgment of God.

It was also a declaration in figurative language that His Divine power would be proved by the impending judgment of God and the increase of His Kingdom.

"Blasphemy," cried the High Priest, and rent his clothes, saying, "What need we of any further witnesses?"

"Ye have heard the blasphemy, what think ye?"

And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death. He was condemned for saying that He was the Son of God.

"But Hebrew jurisprudence had also a curious rule that a unanimous vote for conviction set the defendant free." [13] This meant that if a defendant had not a single friend in court to take his side in the controversy, the court must certainly be prejudiced against him. So flagrant was the effort to condemn Jesus that every member of the Sanhedrin at the meeting endorsed the wish of the president, and, in spite of their rule, agreed with his decision.

It was foul play, and not justice.

Caiaphas and his associates sought only the death of Jesus.

The shame of their act might have thrilled all honest men. Yet even the Evangelists have neither expressed their feelings nor recorded their opinions of the most shameful deed in the world's history. The consent of Jesus to His death as the One Who had to die for men sets the circumstances in another light. It is His willing sacrifice that transcends the way in which His death was encompassed that occupies the minds of the Evangelists and leaves no room for feelings.

That certain irregularities occurred at the trial all authorities admit; but a clear issue remains, the one which concerns mankind. Jesus declared He was the Son of God, and His enemies, in their unbelief, refused to accept His testimony. They rejected Him, their rabble attendants spat upon Him, buffeted Him, struck Him with the palms of their hands, and despitefully used Him — and no one took His part, never a voice was raised in His defence.

[13] R. W. Husband, *The Prosecution of Jesus*, p. 125. Misha, Sanh. 4, 1.

Thus was prophecy fulfilled, "He was despised and rejected of men." [14]

While these unwarrantable insults were heaped upon Him the members of the Sanhedrin left the court.

According to the law against blasphemy, if Jesus had been legally condemned, He should have been stoned; but it was necessary to obtain the consent of the Roman Governor before proceeding with the execution.

Remorse had begun its work in Judas. When the sentence of death was pronounced, if he had expected Jesus to assert His power or the rulers to release Him, his last hope vanished. No one will ever know why he had become a traitor; few believe he wished his Master to die. He rushed towards the rulers as they crossed the Temple precincts with the unholy shekels in his hands, the miserable price of his infamous deed. Perhaps thinking there was yet time to cancel his bargain, he said,[15] "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." [16] With callous indifference the conspirators answered, "What is that to us? See thou to that." But the acknowledgment of his sin brought no repentance. He threw the pieces of money on the marble pavement, and, with awful despair on his face and a fierce pain in his soul, he stole out of the Temple in the darkness towards the haunted glen of Hinnom, and hanged himself on a tree.

The money he had returned, the paltry sum received for his fell purpose, was used to purchase a field in which to bury strangers, and ever since it has been known as the Field of Blood.[17] Above the valley of Hinnom there stands today a gaunt and stunted tree, by the Field of Blood, known amongst all the people as the tree of Judas — a miserable memorial of his awful crime.

Slowly the hours passed while the Son of Man stood bound. The grey dawn of the morning of the most fateful day in the annals of time passed into brightness as the sun rose above the

[14] Isa. liii. 3.
[15] St. Matt. xxvii. 4.
[16] St. Matt. xxvii. 5.
[17] St. Matt. xxvii. 8.

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They led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate

Matthew XXVII: 2

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Art thou the King of the Jews

John XVIII: 33

Hill of Olivet. Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the judgment hall [18] before Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor.[19] Of this notable man, whose name might have been lost in oblivion but for the circumstances in which he was placed, we know little more than appears in the pages of the Bible.[20] He had a Roman's sense of law and order, and a Roman's hatred of the Jews. They knew that he would not listen to an indictment for blasphemy; in order, therefore, to secure His condemnation, the rulers charged Jesus with the political crime of sedition. They said to Pilate, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." [21] When he had heard this accusation Pilate retired into the Prætorium with the Prisoner for examination. The Procurator looked at Him, and as he gazed on His serene and noble figure in peasant garb, surprise at the ridiculous charge overcame him, and he said, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" [22]

The idea of this poor lonely Galilean, with the traces of insult on His face, being a King astonished the Roman. Jesus answered, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?" Pilate replied, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto me: What hast Thou done?" Ignoring the last question, Jesus said: "My Kingdom is not of this world: if My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My Kingdom not from hence." "Art Thou a King then!" said Pilate in astonishment. Yes, a King, but of the Kingdom of Truth. Jesus said, "Every one that is of the Truth heareth My voice," and

[18] The Prætorium, the military headquarters in the castle of Antonia on the north-western corner of the Temple Area, a Gentile building from whence the leaven could not have been removed. The rulers stood in the courtyard.

[19] St. John xviii. 28.

[20] Tacitus alludes to the death of Christ under the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate (*Annals*, XV. iv. 4).

[21] St. Luke xxiii. 2. [22] St. Luke xxiii. 3.

the Governor answered with the question, "What is truth?" [23] It was now clear to the Roman that this high-souled Man with dreams of noble worth was no dangerous revolutionary, and, conducting the Prisoner to the Jews, he pronounced His acquittal, saying, "I find in Him no fault at all." [24] This declaration of innocence kindled the fury of the rulers,[25] and they became more fierce, saying, "He stirreth up the people . . . from Galilee to this place."

Hearing the word Galilee the perplexed Governor saw a way of escape from his dilemma. It happened that the Tetrarch of Galilee was in Jerusalem, and to him Pilate sent the Man of Galilee. Herod was delighted; he had often wished to see Jesus, and hoped to witness His works. Now he could examine Him; but to all he said Jesus "answered nothing." Then his savage feelings burst forth into vulgar mockery in which his minion soldiers joined, and they sent the Prisoner back to Pilate, whose device had failed. He knew the Jewish rulers had set their hearts upon the death of Jesus, his Roman sense of justice rebelled against their condemnation of an innocent man, and in a feeble attempt to compromise he said, "I will chastise Him and release Him." Before he could carry out his wish the scene changed. At that moment a crowd appeared to ask for the release of a prisoner according to the custom of the feast. As a mark of imperial clemency, every year at the Passover a free pardon was granted to one of the people in prison, and at that time a notable rebel named Barabbas lay in the city dungeon. Pilate saw another opening for the escape of Jesus. But his attention was distracted by a message from his wife. In answering her appeal he had to turn from the people, and the rulers persuaded them to ask for the brigand Barabbas. While they were engaged in preparing their request the Procurator listened to the strange message of the forebodings of the woman who had shared his home in Judea. Alarmed by a dream, she begged her husband to have

[23] St. John xviii. 38. [24] St. John xviii. 38. [25] St. Luke xxiii. 5.

nothing to do with the just Man. As he turned again to the people he asked them whether he should release unto them Barabbas or Jesus. They bore no ill-will to Jesus, they even favoured His cause; but, after being incited by the priests and elders to ask for the robber, they did not intend to be baulked of their wish, and they clamoured for Barabbas. Pilate tried again to induce them to accept Jesus, saying, "What evil hath He done?" "He knew that for envy they had delivered Jesus unto him." Other sins were linked with envy, but envy was the forerunner of the rest. Envy led the van of passion in the rulers of the Jews. Hatred and malice followed hard after, and blinded their eyes to truth and goodness.

They called for Barabbas.

Seeing the Governor waver, the rulers threatened to impeach him and said, "If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend." Their threat placed Pilate in an awkward position. He knew what happened to Procurators when the tyrant on the imperial throne even suspected them of *læsa majestas*, and, if the story reached the ears of the Roman Emperor that the Governor of Judea had taken the side of a ringleader of sedition, not only would he lose his position, but in all probability forfeit his life.

It was a cunning move on the part of the rulers.

Once more Pilate talked to them, and asked, "What shall I do, then, with Jesus which is called Christ?" And they cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." When he saw that he could not prevail and his opposition only incensed the people, he "gave sentence that it should be as they required, and he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired: but he delivered Jesus to their will." [26]

Before the Romans crucified a criminal they scourged [27] him, and for this purpose the soldiers led Jesus away. When His lacerated flesh quivered under the strokes of their instru-

[26] St. Luke xxiii. 24, 25.

[27] Josephus, *Ant.* Book V. chap. xi. 1; *Wars*, chap. xi. 14, 9.

ments of torture, and His back was raw and bleeding, they put upon Him a scarlet robe,[28] probably a soldier's old tunic so faded that it looked like purple.[29] One of them stole out into the night and plucked some twigs from a *nubk* tree in the palace garden, made them into a crown of thorns, and placed it on His head. In His hand they put a reed, and with ribald mockery they hailed Him, "King of the Jews." When the brutal sport was ended and Pilate saw the result of their cruelty, thinking the compassion of the people might be aroused at the sight of the pale and bleeding Prisoner, he presented Him to them, saying, "Behold the Man." [30]

While Jesus was thus exhibited to the multitude He was not one man amid the thousand in the Holy City. In Him the best of all the races of the earth were gathered, the best of all human life was hidden in that form crowned with thorns. But the people saw nothing of this; they did not see in Him a new order of human life; the spectacle before them only increased their fury. Once they had been roused nothing appeased their lust for blood.

Washing his hands before them, Pilate said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person; see ye to it." [31] He declared himself free from all responsibility.

"Then all the people answered and said, His blood be on us and on our children." [32]

Rash words uttered in the heat of great public excitement often entail very serious consequences; but no words ever spoken have brought such retribution as this wild and passionate expression of hate. The consciousness of their significance was lost in the fear of the rulers lest their victim should escape from the death they desired. They had forgotten for the moment the full meaning of their responsibility, or they imagined that it would be possible to escape from it because there was no one to take vengeance for the blood that was shed. They knew that a man seldom declares his accountability for

[28] St. Matt. xxvii. 28. [29] St. Mark xv. 17. [30] St. John xix. 5.
[31] St. Matt. xxvii. 24. [32] St. Matt. xxvii. 25.

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And they . . . took the reed, and smote him on the head

Matthew XXVII: 30

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And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head

John XIX: 2

blood unless he feels secure in his strength to defy the avenger. But they could not have been unaware of the well-known factor of Jewish life, of the law of blood in their own Scriptures. God had said, "At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man." [33] A form of the words in Genesis iv. 10, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground," is still preserved in the modern proverb, "Dam butlub dam," *i.e.*, "Blood calls for blood." If a man, even by accident, finds a mark of blood on his garment, he washes his robe, and if he sees a stain on the ground he invariably hides it from the eyes of man and believes that he can stifle the call of blood by covering the stain with sand. He thinks it will, as he says, "lay the *mâred*," the spirit of him who died by an act of violence, the victim of a man's hate. Job, in the bitterness of his soul, cried, "O, earth, earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place." [34] And God declares in Ezekiel xxiv. 8 His judgment on the people who are swift to shed blood in these words, "that it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance: I have set her blood on the top of a rock, that it should not be covered."

Since that fateful day when Christ was condemned for saying He was the Son of God His blood has stained the Jewish name. The race has been haunted by their deed, and a terrible retribution has followed their cry. It cannot be denied that there is nothing in the world's history to compare with the results of the world's tragedy. Wherever a Jew has been found, whether quietly pursuing his calling in the market-place of civilization, or fleeing from its persecution, the blood-guiltiness of the Jewish fathers has been remembered in their children. A prejudice has grown in the hearts of men who have not known anything personally against the Jews, who have not been even personally acquainted with them, a prejudice which cannot be charged to the account of those in whom the inherent feeling exists without reference to the blood that was shed. The cry of the infuriated Jews has reverberated down the

[33] Gen. ix. 5, 6. [34] Job xvi. 18.

corridors of the ages, and even men who have heard only the rudiments of their story shrink from contact with the haunted race. Time has not wiped out their deed, nor has history erased it. On the darkest pages of the annals of mankind it remains as if it had been recorded in letters of blood for all men to read for ever. It accelerated the doom then fast approaching of the people compelled by their own act to tread a bloodstained road, a people afterwards bereft of their country, yet preserved amidst all nations in a way unparalleled, ever moving with restless footsteps in the world of men, conspicuous by the mark upon them that stained their name.

Until the world can discern a deeper meaning in it all, prejudice will veil the secret lesson in the history of the Jew.[35]

[35] *Cf.* Heb. ix. 11–28; Exod. xxiv. 8.

CHAPTER XLI

THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

No time was lost after Jesus had been condemned. The soldiers immediately proceeded to carry out the sentence. Two beams of wood to make the cross were laid upon His shoulder as Jesus was led out of the prison cell attached to the Judgment Hall in the Castle of Antonia. Spent with the long vigil of His sleepless night, He swayed under the burden before He reached the place of execution, and the soldiers looked around for some one to take His place beneath His load. Simon of Cyrene, a stranger pilgrim from a land across the sea, having attracted the attention of the guard while gazing on the central Figure of the procession, was seized to bear His cross. At first it might have been an unwilling service, he may have struggled to free himself from the callous soldiers; but something in his history indicates a change. How else could He have been the father of Alexander and Rufus,[1] two of the names on the roll of the Church of Christ? The spirit of the devout pilgrim was ready for his Lord. He saw what no others could see in the Man of Sorrows in the midst of the throng, and Jesus must have turned and looked in gratitude on the shining eyes of Simon as the wood of the cross was laid upon his back. That look brought the man of Cyrene into the fellowship of the suffering Christ, and the deed he wrought that day when he bore the cross was the most eminent service man had ever done for Jesus. It was the greatest day in Simon's life.[2]

Slowly the party marched to the place for the execution, a slight elevation beyond the northern wall, a little hill shaped like a skull, hence its name in English; in Hebrew, Golgotha;[3] and its Latin equivalent Calvaria.

[1] St. Mark xv. 21. [2] St. Luke xxiii. 26. [3] St. Mark xv. 22.

From the stillness of the throng loud lamentations burst, the wailing of Eastern women for the dead. Their hearts were moved for Jesus, who was on His way to die; to die as a felon on a Roman cross. As their cries reached His ears, He stopped and turned, and with words of gentle chiding He bade them weep no more for Him, but for themselves, and their children.[4] The doom of their city and their destiny were borne upon His soul. In effect He said, "If a fruitful tree like Me be delivered to destruction, what shall be the fate of the barren?"[5]

Outside the city the procession stopped for the brief preparation of the last stage of the tragedy, and the people poured out of the gate in scornful, jeering crowds, some of the people who but a few days earlier had followed the Son of Man with shouts of exultation and loud Hosannahs. Never a word had been said in His defence, and not a hand was raised for Him now. But a merciful custom prevailed from which even He might benefit. Medicated wine was administered to men about to die. Jesus refused the cup that was given Him to deaden His pain.[6] He chose to meet God awake. He would not go through the dark valley with clouded eyes and die with senses dulled. The heart, that had never been untrue since it began to beat, faltered not in the face of death. Calm and serene He stood, submitting with simple dignity to the hands of the executioners.

At nine o'clock in the morning their work began. Stripped of his clothing, Jesus was laid on the upright shaft of the instrument of torture, with His arms outstretched on the cross-beams, His hands made fast at either end by heavy nails driven through the palms, into the wood. His feet were fastened together below.

Before the cross was raised aloft a board was fixed above His head with the inscription of His accusation painted on it, and His name: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."[7]

[4] St. Luke xxiii. 28.
[5] St. Luke xxiii. 31.
[6] St. Mark xv. 23.
[7] St. John xix. 19.

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And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

John XIX: 5

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Pilate . . . took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person

Matthew XXVII: 24

The King of the Jews was the charge on which He was condemned. Pilate wrote this title in his anger to insult the rulers who had frustrated his purpose to release the Prisoner. When they protested, he said: "What I have written, I have written." [8] His verdict stands for all time, as his unconscious prophecy of the testimony of humanity and the claim of Jesus. He claimed to be the final moral authority and the Judge of all mankind.[9] But the consummation of all His claims was to be the King of a Kingdom, spiritual, universal, and eternal.[10] A King whose throne was a cross.

On the little hill the grim instrument of death rose above the garden [11] where the lilies grew. Beside that hill, crowned with a living wreath of pleasant verdure, flowers in rich profusion bloomed. All nature gay with the sweet tokens of joyous springtime smiled around its Lord. The light wind that played among the olive-trees fanned His cheek like the breath of heaven on the life of love; of the love that never dies.

Between the cross and the flowers there seems a strange contradiction in the providence of God. Love will disclose its secret. As the afterglow of an Eastern sunset falling on the flowers kindles them into unexpected splendours, so the light of God illumines the soul of man for him to penetrate the deep things encompassing Jesus, Who taught men through the flowers [12] that everything is held in love eternal. The Divine hand which planted the lilies, that men may recognize the measure of His care, formed also the purpose of the cross that men might realize the magnitude of His love. And the Divine Son knew the Father's meaning in both the cross and the flowers. His love made the pathway to the cross, and from it; for the love that has its pain has also its paradise.

From the city gate, and from the avenues through the gardens of the villas in the suburbs, when passion had subsided and the tumult ceased, crowds of morbid spectators regardless of suffering passed in slow procession to view the sight. Few

[8] St. John xix. 22. [9] St. John v. 24, 27. [10] St. John xviii. 36.
[11] St. John xix. 41. [12] St. Matt. vi. 28. *Cf.* page 328.

amongst them harboured feelings of pity. Those who were dearest to Jesus in human thought were the most helpless; some of them stood afar off in fear and utter desolation; others in sympathy gathered as near the foot of the cross as they were permitted by the rough soldiers; Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and at least one disciple, the disciple John.[13]

Beneath the cross the soldiers of the quaternion set to guard the execution, oblivious of the magnitude of the tragedy enacted above them, with callous indifference spent their time with the dice-box and gambled for the garments of the crucified Jesus.[14] His enemies stood in groups gloating with satisfaction at His defeat, wagging their heads, and saying one to another, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save."[15] Even in their hatred they acknowledged His good deeds, not for the ascription of merit, but for reference to His inability to exercise His power in His own defence. They little thought of the truth contained in their derisive utterance. If a man will save others in any kind of salvation the law he must obey is, that he cannot save himself.

When Jesus came to fulfil this inexorable condition He knew the extent of the demand that would be made upon Him; He knew there was no other way of saving mankind than by His sacrifice. Such an amazing event could not be traced by His enemies to its ultimate recesses. The rulers followed the beaten track of their own thoughts, which presented to them no difficulty, as their imagination enlightened only its narrow path; but the object that happened to lie on that path they saw with extraordinary distinctness, just because the area that the light covered was so restricted. They saw Jesus, only as the Man who had been so constant a rebuke to them that He hurt their feelings, and they believed, or thought they believed, that His death would remove the disturbing element from their disordered minds, that as He passed from their sight the menace to their peace would disappear, and once more their way

[13] St. John xix. 25. [14] St. John xix. 24. [15] St. Mark xv. 31.

of life would be free from condemnation. They did not realize that what they hated so fiercely was the accusive monotony of truth which memory would never fail to administer so long as within them dwelt the evil that is always opposed to good.

They hated Jesus also for the perplexity which had arisen in their minds concerning Him. He had renounced all the honour that might have been given Him for satisfying their hopes and acceding to their wishes. But they were incapable, owing to the state of their sordid minds and their selfish hearts, of perceiving in that renunciation the triumphant exhibition of greatness which finds its supreme means of expression in self-sacrifice. Having frustrated their hopes, having robbed them of the consummation of their wishes, to behold in Him a deliverer from the intolerable yoke of Rome, their passionate desire for His destruction burned more fiercely in what seemed the hour of His defeat.

Jesus had to die that, in His act of dying, men might see that in the supreme revelation of sacrifice is the supreme revelation of holiness.

It was in the mind of God from all eternity that Christ should in due time die for men.[16] The remedy anticipated the evil. All the long history of law and of ritual in the Jewish Scriptures is God's progressive revelation to men of the moral processes in their struggle and suffering against evil, and all through the Jewish dispensation expectation and faith in the coming Messiah were expressed chiefly by sacrifice.[17]

[16] 1 Pet. i. 19, 20; Rev. xiii. 8; Gal. iv. 4; Gen. iii. 15.

[17] In the customs of the people in the land of the Bible, as well as in the language of the Bible, and the sacrificial system of the Old Testament scriptures there are two views of human beings. One deals with each person separated from all the rest and recognizes clearly individual responsibility; the other treats the individual as a representative of the body of the people of which he forms a part, whether it is the family, the race, or humanity, and he shares its accountability. The act of one was rightly regarded as the act of all, because it expressed a characteristic that was common to all.

By making all sacrifices representative of the people in the Israelitish system, offered on their behalf by appointed ministers, the fundamental idea of sacrifice as an act of restoration to the fellowship of God was not

We may marvel why at the Passover, when the lamb was prepared for sacrifice in the Jewish homes, a glimmer of the truth did not dawn upon the Jewish minds of the necessity of Christ's sacrifice, and wonder still more why those who had heard the Baptist's declaration, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," [18] could not perceive in the death of Jesus the consummation of the sacrificial system and the great salvation of mankind. They saw quite clearly after it had been accomplished. But while the sacrifice was being

changed, stress was laid on what was required to retain or recover that fellowship.

At first the communion was purely physical, then in the better spirit of the people the symbolical character of the act of communion appeared, because the life they had in common was in the blood. The sense that the blood was Divine never wholly disappeared from the primitive mind.

The unlettered Bedawy in his desert home, desiring to prolong his generation (in this desire lies the germ of the thought of everlasting life), yet fearing disaster in the precarious nature of desert life, kills a goat on the birth of his son, that by the shedding of blood a substitute may be offered for the life of his child and the continuation of his race. He feels that something should be done to redress all that has been wrong in his relation to God. He may have a very indifferent conception of God, and a very unsatisfactory notion of his own state, but underlying the act of sacrifice, which, being representative, has no virtue of its own to obtain relief, rests the desire for communion between himself and a Divine Being, and in the idea of sacrifice lies the thought and expectation of forgiveness. Sacrifice, according to the mind of an Eastern man, represents a connection between man and God, and forgiveness of sin and restoration to Divine favour are sought through the shedding of the blood of a victim when it is offered to God. According to this belief the blood is the life, and in it is something Divine, and the outpouring of the blood becomes a means of communication with the Divine Being Who accepts the offering of the sinner and gives him relief from the sin he has committed.

Men in every nation have felt that they were not altogether right, vague misgivings at times disturbed them, and they were haunted with strange terrors of a penalty awaiting them in the future for what they had done and hidden from the eyes of man. They sought to avert the calamity they feared because of the sin they had committed, and when discovered they offered some kind of substitute, they endeavoured to do or give something, to repair the damage.

Man had hitherto thought only of himself, his own way of escape; his efforts had been directed towards the maintenance of his own existence. Christ thought of others; He gave Himself for others. In Him God's plan was perfected.

[18] St. John i. 29.

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They found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross

Matthew XXVII: 32

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And there followed him a great company of people

Luke XXIII: 27

offered the scene on Calvary eclipsed all that had gone before, and those who looked for the redemption of Israel saw only what they thought was the extinction of all their hopes.[19] It was not possible that evil could overcome good, that the love of God could be conquered. The fear of it is the darkness in men's minds that needs to be enlightened.

The bitter mockery of the priests continued as Jesus bowed His head on the cross-crowned hill. They did not with an honest gaze look at Him hanging there; they talked among themselves. If only they could have seen what others saw,[20] if the veil had been lifted from their eyes to behold the face of Jesus in His act of dying, even their perverted idea of what was right and true might have been abandoned. They said, "If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him; for He said, I am the Son of God." [21]

As if to gain the approbation of the rulers by joining in their taunts and possibly a mitigation of his penalty through their aid, one of the bandits on the cross beside the suffering Jesus cried, "If Thou be the Christ, save Thyself and us." [22] His companion in crime had looked on Jesus and something in the vision filled his heart with a strange emotion. Deep in his soul something stirred, so small, so fine, so keen and leavening, his conscience awakened, a new life moving within him entered into a new experience. He rebuked the railing thief and said, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly! for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man hath done nothing amiss." [23] He saw Jesus on the cross, he saw beyond the cross what no other eyes had seen. Turning to Jesus he said, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." [24] He

19 St. Luke xxiv. 21.
20 The dying thief and the centurion of the Roman guard.
21 St. Matt. xxvii. 42, 43.
22 St. Luke xxiii. 39.
23 St. Luke xxiii. 41.
24 St. Luke xxiii. 42.

sought not safety for a life on earth, he saw the certainty of a life in the eternal fellowship of Jesus. He was the first man to gain that sight, and Jesus confirmed his faith in future glory, and set the freedom of the malefactor's soul in His own keeping. He said, "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." [25]

Seven times He spake; some were exclamations of the Man; some were utterances of thought for others. When He felt the agony of the noontide heat on a frame exhausted by the anguish of His trial, and the rough treatment of His persecutors, a human cry burst from His lips: "I thirst." [26] One of the soldiers, in pity for Him, responded by sharing his sour wine with the Sufferer. Dipping a sponge in the vessel containing the refreshment, he pressed it to the lips of Jesus.[27] When the death struggle of His flesh began and momentary darkness passed over Him as He bore the burden of the world's sin, He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me." [28] The third exclamation was near His last: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." [29] Before these words were spoken He thought of others, and first of the men who had compassed his death and the men around Him who had taken part in the crucifixion and said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." [30] The next words cheered the dying thief.[31] He then thought of His mother, standing by the cross.

With bowed head, stricken with grief and burdened with care, her white hair, and her face furrowed with the lines of age, which soon appear in Eastern women, she stood probably supported by the other Marys gathered there. One more sorrow greater than all the rest had been added to her load when failing strength could ill support it, and before her declining days the shadows of poverty and helplessness were cast. Mastering His agony, Jesus spoke to her, and to His disciple John. To

[25] St. Luke xxiii. 43. [26] St. John xix. 28. [27] St. Matt. xxvii. 48.
[28] St. Matt. xxvii. 46. [29] St. Luke xxiii. 46. [30] St. Luke xxiii. 34.
[31] St. Luke xxiii. 43.

His mother He said, "Woman, behold thy son." To John, "Son, behold thy mother." [32] From that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

Finally Jesus said, with voice triumphant, "It is finished," partly for Himself and partly for others. "It is finished." [33]

As death's dark shadows gathered around Him the sky grew black with clouds that obscured the sun,— an infrequent but not an unusual sight in Syria, when great heat appears before the summer has advanced and the atmospheric conditions are disturbed. Earthquake shocks followed the darkness, and the storm broke over the city. The passing of the Christ of God was "knelled by nature's vast convulsions," and men feared in the darkness like the wretch who had sold his Lord, for they had crucified their King.

In order to intensify the shame of the criminal, the Romans allowed the body to perish on the cross; but the Jews, moved with a more delicate feeling for their own comfort, desired the bodies of Jesus and the malefactors to be taken away. It could not have been pleasant for residents in the northern suburb to see corpses rotting in the sun, with vultures feeding on human remains, as "righteous" men walked to the Temple for prayer. At the request of the rulers Pilate sent soldiers to break the legs of the crucified, so that death might follow quickly, and the bodies be removed. But when the soldiers came to Jesus they found Him already dead; one of them, to be quite certain, pierced the side of Jesus with his lance and there flowed from His ruptured heart both water and blood. In a double sense the Saviour died. He died of a broken heart and a body broken on the cross, and His blood from pierced hands and feet and riven side fell in drops on the little hill; drop by drop it stained the green grass red.

When the last drop fell the most solemn hour in the history of the world was struck, and the crimson stain on Golgotha marked the beginning of a new life for mankind. Underneath the rocky crest of Calvary, in the Church of the Holy Sep-

[32] St. John xix. 26. [33] St. John xix. 30.

ulchre, there is a little chapel called the Chapel of the Tomb of Adam. It bears the testimony of a Greek legend which illustrates the inspired words of St. Paul, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." [34] The ancient tale informs us that when the life-blood flowed from the Saviour's side it fell on the bones of Adam, and he rose from the dead. A new man was begotten through the blood of Jesus. He gave His life for men that men might live.

The "all" in one clause of St. Paul's statement must be the "all" in the other, so that the death of Jesus Christ cancelled the condemnation passed on the human race: "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." [35]

The sacrificial system of the Mosaic and Jewish dispensation, made by faith as though Christ had already come, was fulfilled in Him and closed with His sacrifice. "The veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" [36] in the convulsions which passed through the city while He was hanging on the cross, as through Him a new and living way opened for man to gain eternal freedom in the fellowship of God.[37]

The only man that saw Jesus die and left a record of the sight was the Centurion of the Roman guard.[38] He gazed on the dying face of Jesus as he stood beneath the cross. He knew nothing about His life, he was not even interested in it, having scarcely read the name above His head. He called Jesus "this Man." But he had witnessed His trial, his men had arrested Jesus in the garden and brought Him to the house of Annas, and he had charge of the soldiers who guarded the Prisoner. The Centurion had directed the scourging; he stood by while his soldiers mocked the Galilean; he gave the order to march when He was taken to Calvary; he superintended the crucifixion; and he saw Him die.

[34] 1 Cor. xv. 22.
[35] Rom. v. 18.
[36] St. Mark xv. 38.
[37] Rom. viii. 1.
[38] Rev. J. M. Clow, *The Day of the Cross*, p. 299.

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Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children

Luke XXIII: 28

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And they parted his raiment, and cast lots

Luke XXIII: 34

With a Roman's sense of justice, he saw that all was wrong. The moral beauty and the innocence of the Crucified forced him to declare, "Certainly this was a righteous Man." It was not the character of Jesus only which arrested the attention of the Centurion, but the way He died. The Roman had seen men die before: hardened criminals on the cross, gladiators in the arena, and valiant soldiers on the battle-field. Yes, he had seen men die, but never a man like the Man before him. There was a mystery about His death which he could not fathom, a majesty in it that filled him with reverence and awe. His pagan mind could not grasp its full significance. The earthquake and the darkness, the taunts of the mocking crowds, the great words of Jesus, overwhelmed him; and he cried, "Truly this Man was the Son of God."[39] Such a dying was not the death of an ordinary mortal like himself, but the passing of a God.

The vultures gathered in the distant sky, slowly the mob dispersed, and, sorrowing, the disciples of Jesus departed; the day was dying too. Joseph of Arimathea, having begged the body of Jesus from Pilate, took it down from the cross. Nicodemus met him; and holy women who had followed their Lord approached the scene of execution to see the last of the One they loved. His body was prepared for burial and placed in Joseph's tomb in his garden. A seal was set and a watch was kept for fear of His disciples.[40]

The situation of Joseph's garden, where he laid the body of Jesus in a new sepulchre, has not been located with a certainty that subdues all controversy.

The last building that sheltered our Lord on earth was the fortress of Antonia, which stood where a minaret now rears its head at the north-west corner of the Haram enclosure. A street ran along the fosse of the Antonia; it can be seen under the school of the Sisters of Sion in the Tarik Bab Sitti Mariam, usually known as the Via Dolorosa. Beneath this comparatively modern street the ancient one is visible, with its

[39] St. Mark xv. 39. [40] St. Mark xxvii. 64.

marks of chariot-wheels and horses' hoofs on the rock-cut surface of the old city. The feet of our Blessed Lord trod on this hard stone as He walked to Calvary. Traces of the street are soon lost in the structures built on the rock foundation, but references in the Bible indicate quite clearly the direction of the place of crucifixion. Such statements as "without the gate," "they that passed by reviled Him," "and many women were there, beholding afar off," show that the site was known before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

The few Christians who returned after its destruction found a very different city. It had suffered from a terrible siege and was well-nigh destroyed. No mention is made either of the place of crucifixion or the sepulchre in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistles Christians are in no way enjoined to visit or care for holy places. It is extremely likely, therefore, that the precise spot was lost in the desolation, while the idea of the locality remained in the minds of the Christians.

In A.D. 135 another great calamity befel the city. An insurrection broke out under the false Messiah Simon Barcochba, which Hadrian, the Roman Emperor, put down with a ruthless hand. His indignation expressed itself in his determination to level the city with the ground and build another city, with a new name, on a new plan. A street of columns (some of them can be seen today) ran through its entire length like the street in Jerash over Jordan, and in all probability in other respects it was similar. Its name, Ælia Capitolina, erased from the memory for nearly two hundred years even the title of old Jerusalem. But that would not destroy the locality, even if the actual site was obliterated.

In A.D. 335 the present position was chosen for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. At first there were only two holy places — the place of crucifixion and the tomb, the place of resurrection; the rest were added in the course of years to represent in careful detail the complete story of the death and resurrection of our Lord Christ.

This position, inside the gate of the traditional site of Cal-

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And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him

Luke XXIII: 33

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"It is finished"

John XIX: 30

vary and the sepulchre, has appeared to many intelligent observers to require more substantial confirmation than mere ecclesiastical tradition; but tradition cannot be entirely ignored. In this instance it has considerable support. There is an old tomb in the church as a proof that the site was once outside the gate; the dead were always buried beyond the city wall.

Modern minds have been concentrated on a spot outside the northern gate, a little knoll selected as the more probable site of Calvary. In the face of this hill a tomb has been found which many people now regard as being more likely, than the traditional tomb, to have contained the body of Jesus. Sceptics have demanded a sight of the actual tomb before accepting the fact of His death.[41] If every fact in history had to be proved in a similar fashion there would be little left for us to believe. The history of Jerusalem since Jesus died has been one of disaster, the vicissitudes through which the city has passed are almost inconceivable; yet, in spite of all the eight sieges which have followed that of Titus there are remains above and below ground enough to satisfy an unbiased mind of its place in history. Even if the place of execution cannot be satisfactorily established to suit all classes of people, the death of Christ has been authenticated by eye-witnesses. It has been recorded in Roman history. The fact is of greater importance than the place, and many people believe the fact without having seen the place that is kept in remembrance, and are satisfied.

[41] A few years ago when the officials in Constantinople confiscated certain copies of the Epistle to the Galatians, before releasing them the authorities demanded the death certificate of the writer (St. Paul) for their assurance that the letters were not sent by a modern scribe to the people of Galata, one of the suburbs of the city.

CHAPTER XLII

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

The death of Jesus appeared to be a terrible misfortune to the disciples. Their cherished visions were all dissipated; their hopes of a Messianic reign were all destroyed. Vivid pictures had been associated in their minds with the dazzling pomp of an approaching Kingdom. Ideas furnished by these concrete forms had hovered round their thoughts in an intangible structure of dreams which they had built about the future. All had been dashed to pieces in the most heart-breaking manner. It seemed as if God had endorsed the verdict of Caiaphas and the Roman Governor by permitting Jesus to die on the cross. Stricken with sorrow for their Lord, and with shame in their disappointed ambition, the disciples passed out of sight.

They had seen the Messiah die, and the blow thus received to their materialistic hopes struck home to their hearts, and brought with it an experience which changed their lives. Death has a wondrous power of appeal; it awakens in men new thoughts and turns them into new directions. When the Master died, in a sense the disciples were buried with Him; they also passed through the dark valley. In the three sad days of their seclusion, memory worked its way into their hearts as the shattering of their expectations revealed more truly the love that had been bestowed upon them. Jesus had told them He would rise again, but it was too much for them to believe, though they had seen Him raise Lazarus from the dead. Now the grave held their Master fast.[1] A Roman seal was placed upon the tomb, and a Roman guard was set to watch it. The guard guaranteed that no one would be able to remove the body of the crucified Jesus. It is inconceivable, as some peo-

[1] St. Matt. xxvii. 66.

ple alleged,[2] that His dejected disciples entered into a conspiracy to overcome the sentinels and steal the corpse of their Lord. What gain could possibly accrue to them from a situation that would leave them with the torn and bleeding body of the One they loved, and no Guide in their sad and forlorn condition? They were too overwhelmed with the terrible catastrophe, and too much afraid of the future, to think of taking the body away from its resting-place.

On the morning of the third day, before even the streaks of dawn lit up the eastern sky, several of the holy women, having purchased spices, determined to go to the sepulchre to anoint, if possible, the remains of Jesus. On the way a difficulty occurred to them which they had not before considered, and they said anxiously one to another, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?"[3] They did not apparently connect the shaking of the earth on that resurrection morning with the answer to their question. St. Matthew explains its significance; he says, "Behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, and for fear of him the keepers did shake and become as dead men."[4] As the women drew near they saw the stone was rolled away, and Mary Magdalene, unable to bear the suspicion forming within her that the body of Jesus might have been stolen, returned hurriedly to the city, sought Peter and John, and said, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him."[5]

The confusion of the keepers may have induced Mary to make that statement. Meanwhile, the frightened soldiers fled to the Sanhedrin with the news of what had happened, and the

2 St. Matt. xxviii. 13.

3 I saw a stone rolled from the mouth of a sepulchre in Jerusalem, discovered during my residence, that required two men with crowbars to remove it up the inclined plane in front of the opening into the tomb.

4 St. Matt. xxviii. 2–4.

5 St. John xx. 2.

matter was settled in a manner agreeable to all the authorities concerned; but it neither explained the mystery nor destroyed the truth of the resurrection. The holy women went into the tomb and found it empty — a fact admitted by all who were associated with the discovery, which has been commemorated in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre that covers an empty tomb. There is an uncertainty about the site, but no doubt has ever been expressed about the condition of the tomb, nor has ever a whisper been heard of another place where the body might have been found.

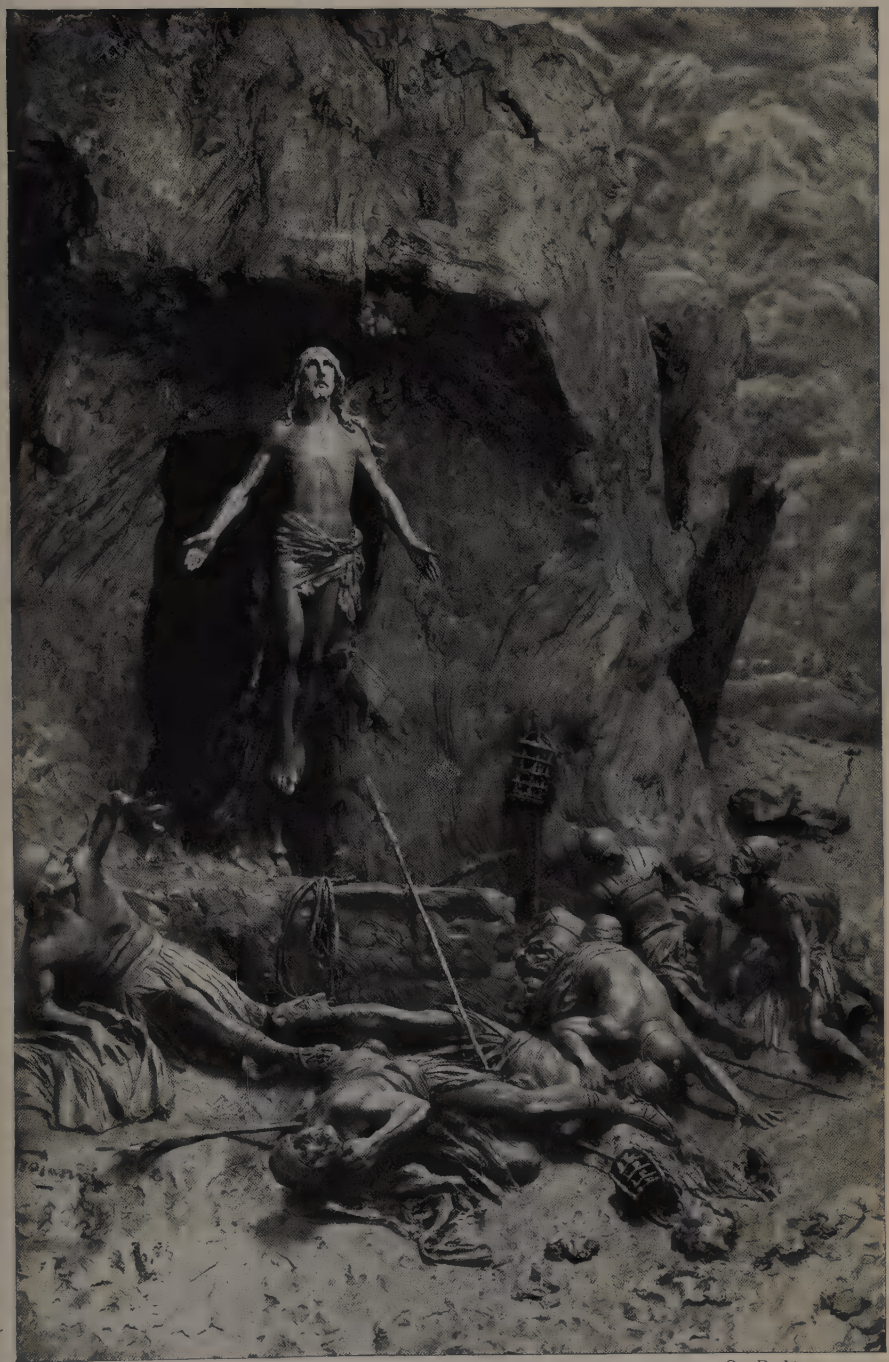
An angel sitting on the right side of the sepulchre said to the women, "Be not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, Who was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him. But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you." [6]

One surprise followed another; first the confused guards, next the open sepulchre, then the empty tomb, and afterwards the angel's message. All these things amazed and alarmed the women,[7] and they fled from the place.

Mary Magdalene, having hastened to the city for Peter and John, told them what she feared; they ventured out of their hiding-place to ascertain the truth. Proceeding quickly to the garden, wonderingly sceptical, John outran his companion. Arriving first at the sepulchre, he looked in and saw the linen clothes lying as they had enclosed the body; but no body could be seen. John's surprise as he noticed these things from the entrance attracted Peter. Bending before the low opening cut in the solid limestone rock on the face of the hill, he looked within where a square chamber had been hewn, with a *loculus* on one of its three sides for the reception of the body. At the end of the *loculus* the stone had been left, as is usual in ancient tombs of this description in evidence today around Jerusalem,[8] and at one end the women had seen the angel

[6] St. Mark xvi. 6, 7. [7] St. Mark xvi. 8.

[8] *E.g.* the Garden Tomb outside the Damascus Gate, and the tomb in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre encased in marble.



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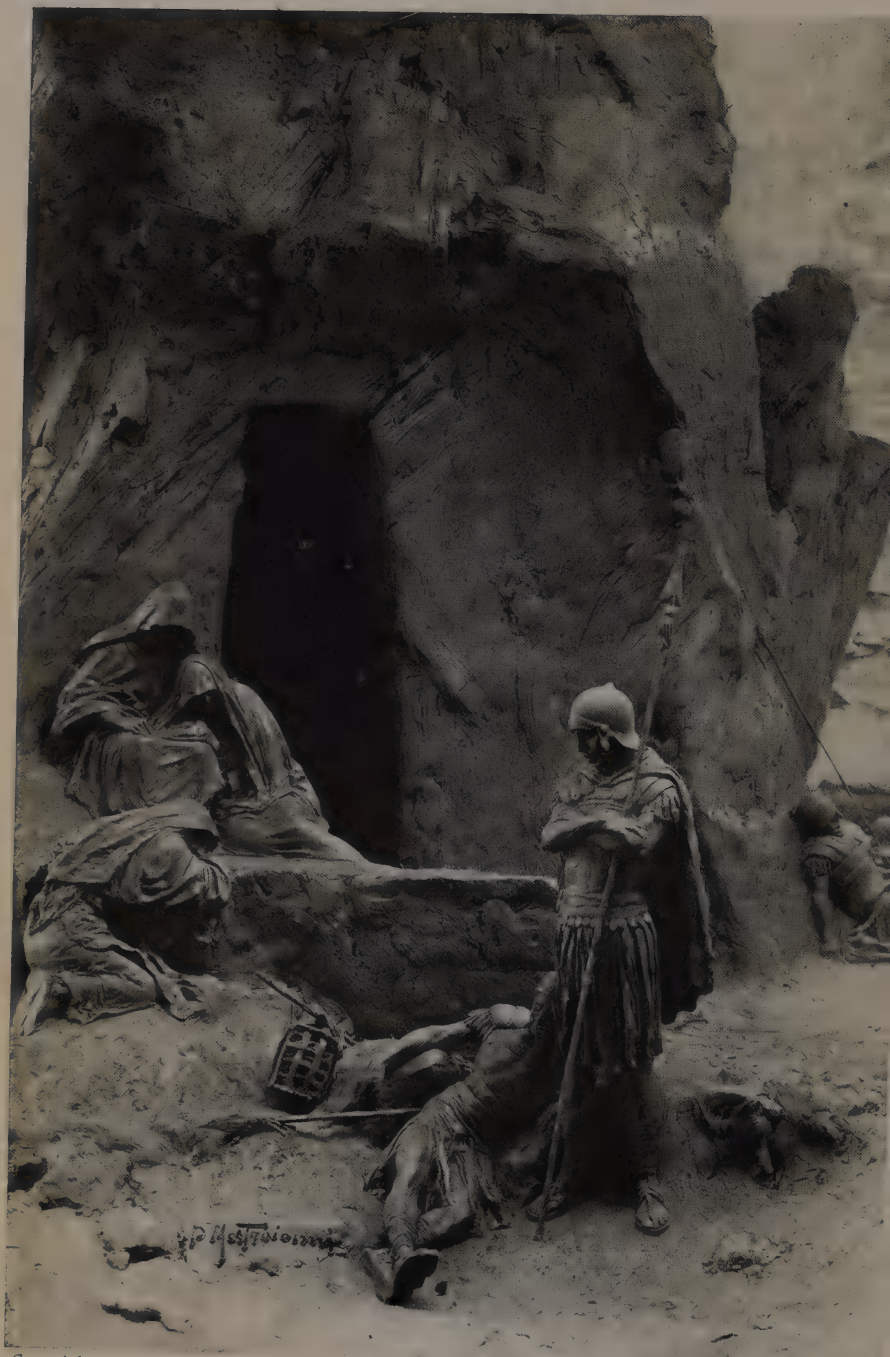
And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men

Matthew XXVIII: 4



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And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre

Matthew XXVII: 61

seated. John's first impression, on seeing the grave-clothes, was that the body of Jesus lay within them undisturbed. Peter eagerly rushed forward to examine the sepulchre. Strange indeed was the sight because of the funeral garments. If the body had been stolen why were they left so neatly lying, with "the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself" [9] as if the body had passed through them without disarranging the different articles? Peter particularly noticed the headcloth on the ledge of the *loculus* where the head had rested, as if it were still there. At last the truth dawned on the minds of the two disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead. The sepulchre was untouched, the grave-clothes undisturbed; no human hand had been laid on the body of Jesus; He had come forth in His own power. The disciples ought not to have been surprised, but John explained the cause of their doubt: "For as yet they understood not the Scriptures that He must rise again from the dead." [10]

Peter and John departed from the sepulchre with the swelling flood of awakening knowledge filling them with strange emotions. Jesus was not in the sepulchre; that He had risen from the dead seemed to be true; still, doubt and difficulties beset the two witnesses of the empty tomb; they had not yet seen their Lord. They were satisfied with the empty tomb; they needed a satisfaction in their empty hearts. Jesus fills the hungry soul with gladness. It is in His way of doing it that we see His resurrection power. He not only fulfilled His promise to rise again; we have its assurance in the proofs furnished by the manner in which He manifested Himself, and that assurance is doubly sure in the experience of believers. He reveals Himself in the various conditions of their life and thoughts as He showed Himself to comfort His bereaved followers. He is not bound by one particular method; He does not always appear to one as He communicates Himself to another.

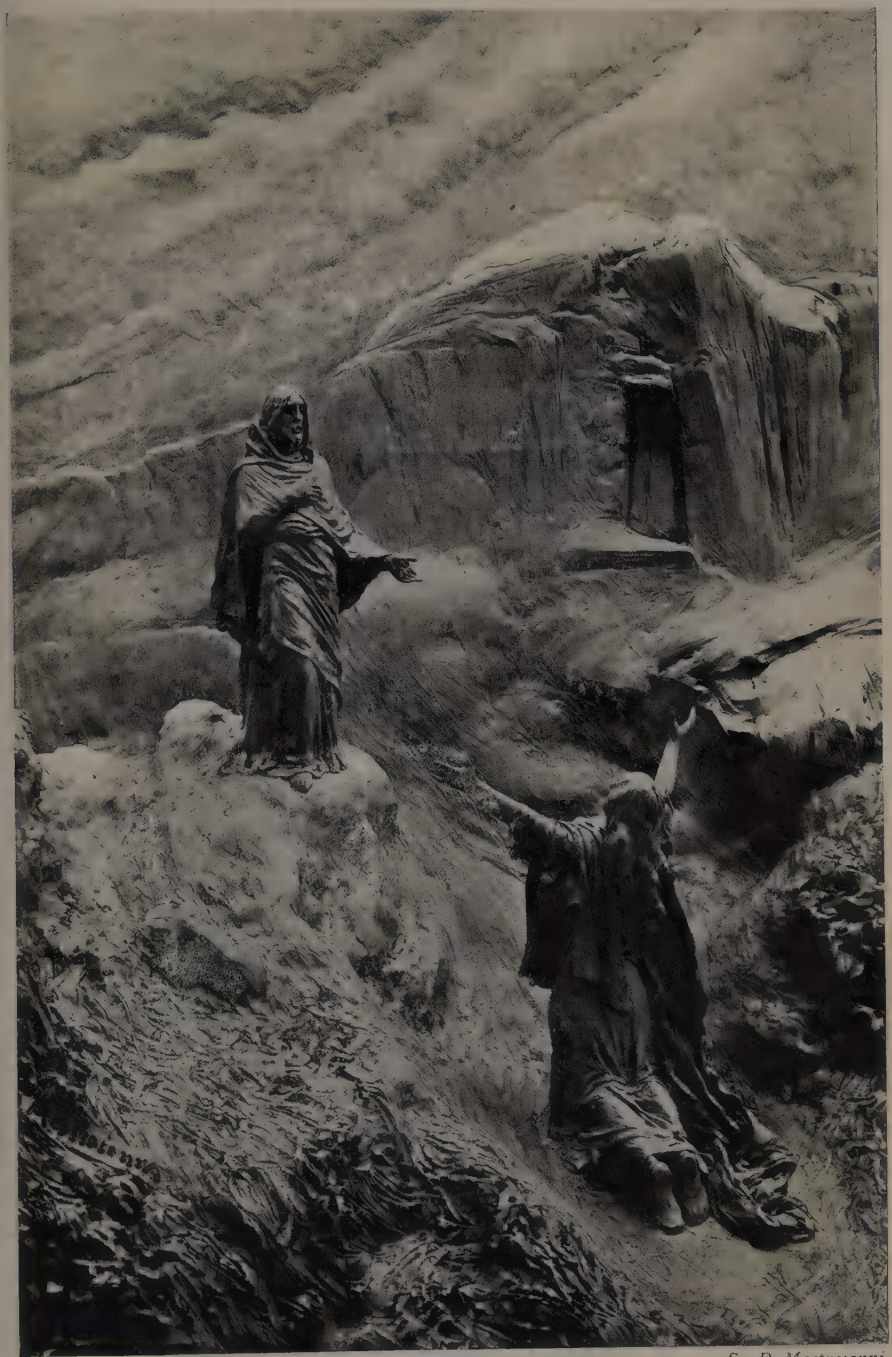
[9] St. John xx. 7.

[10] St. John xx. 9.

When Peter and John went away Mary remained at the sepulchre weeping. Presently she looked inside, and there, sitting at the head and feet, where the body of Jesus had lain, were two angels. They spoke to her and said, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" She said unto them, "Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him."[11] She then turned and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know Him; even when He asked her why she wept and whom she sought she did not recognize His voice. Thinking He was the gardener, she asked if Jesus had been taken away, and if he could tell her where He was laid. Not until the tender and familiar tones of her Master's voice pronounced her name and Jesus called her Mary, did she know her Lord. Instantly she moved towards Him with hands outstretched and said, "Rabboni!" ("Oh. my Master!"); but He checked her desire to embrace His feet, saying, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God."[12] And she went and told His disciples all He had said.

During the day two disciples, one called Cleopas and the other whose name is unknown, went to Emmaus, a few miles from Jerusalem. They had heard the news circulated by the women amongst their friends, but they appeared incredulous, and discussed the startling events that had occurred in the Holy City. While they were engaged in arguments relating to the news, a traveller going in the same direction overtook them without being recognized as their risen Lord. He appeared to them in another form.[13] When He asked them what they were discussing they answered with surprise, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem and hast not known the things which be come to pass?"[14] and then told Him what had happened. In turn the Stranger expressed His astonishment that they should have been so slow to believe all the prophets had

[11] St. John xx. 13.
[12] St. John xx. 17.
[13] St. Mark xvi. 12.
[14] St. Luke xxiv. 18.



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Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and said unto him, Rabboni

John XX: 16

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Jesus himself stood in the midst of them and saith . . . Peace be unto you

Luke XXIV: 36

spoken. He said, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" Then, beginning with Moses and the prophets, "He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." [15] He took the book they had studied all their lives, with which they were personally familiar, and led them through its pages, and so illumined the darkness of its prophetic mysteries that the new light He shed on their interpretation of the old Scriptures unveiled a depth of meaning and warmth of love that their hearts glowed with a feeling they had never known before. As they drew near the village the Stranger seemed as if His destination lay farther on; but they begged Him to stay with them, saying, "Abide with us, for it is towards evening." Still unknown, He entered with them into the house, and when the evening meal was served He took the bread, blessed it and brake it, and in the breaking of the bread they saw the pierced Hands and recognized the Master, and He vanished from their sight. They also rose and returned to Jerusalem.

Meanwhile in the Holy City their friends were assembled in the upper room. There is no absolute proof, but reasonable probability, that the place where the Lord's Supper was instituted became the subsequent meeting-place of the Apostles in Jerusalem. The force of association, strong at all times, would induce the troubled disciples of Jesus to gather in the room which brought them into remembrance of the presence of their Lord. The unnamed friend of the Man of Galilee had exhibited such concern for the wishes of Jesus that his hospitality would not allow him to forget the disconsolate followers. They had reason to be sad. When, humanly speaking, Jesus most needed their sympathy, all forsook Him and fled. Disturbing thoughts arising from the stories of His resurrection added to the confusion of their minds, harassed with care, and to the tremor in their hearts, crushed with sorrow. When most they needed their Lord He came to them, passing into their midst with a message of peace. Two were absent; one,

[15] St. Luke xxiv. 27.

the traitor, had gone to his own place; and the other, Thomas, had not the heart to join his brethren. He could least afford to be away; but it is ever so: when a particular man ought to be present with the believers in their meeting, and really needs to be there, he often feels unequal to the opportunity.

As Jesus entered the upper room He greeted the assembled disciples with the usual Eastern salutation, "Peace be unto you." It had a special significance to the little band bereft of their Leader. He showed them the wounds in His hands and His side; He wished to prove His bodily resurrection. He exhibited His scars as evidence of His identity, for the disciples to realize that His body had not been carried away, but was there before them. It was the same body; His resurrection accounted for its movement and its instant invisibility, and a change of raiment for the inability of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, and Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, to recognize immediately their Lord. Nothing but actual experience, tested by every one who had seen Him, could have convinced them of so bewildering, so unique a fact.[16] His death had been certain: it had been certified by the Centurion in charge of the crucifixion; it is recorded in the annals of Roman history.[17] His bodily resurrection was equally sure. Jesus said, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I myself; handle Me, and see."[18] At another time "they held Him by the feet."[19] While the resurrection body was physically visible, and Jesus referred to its constituent parts, there still remains the mystery concerning their sustenance. Though identical with the body crucified, it is not necessary to assume an identity of particles in the resurrection body; its mode of action being new, a difference appeared in its control which accounted for its movement and similarly for its support. The disciples were satisfied with the reality and permanence of the body of their Lord, and their hearts were filled with joy. Hope revived in His disconsolate followers as faith grasped the truth

[16] St. John xix. 32–37.
[17] Tacitus, *Annals*, XV. iv. 4.
[18] St. Luke xxiv. 39.
[19] St. Matt. xxviii. 9.

of life eternal. Jesus breathed on them as a sign of bestowing that Divine life proceeding from Him, adding the words, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," in preparation for the fulness of His power. He said again, "Peace be unto you; as My Father has sent Me, even so send I you."

He then left them.

After that He was seen of James, the brother of the Nazareth home. St. Paul relates this testimony,[20] and also that Jesus appeared to five hundred brethren in one place. Writing about twenty years after, the great Apostle stated that a number of those eye-witnesses were yet alive. And on the Sunday following His first appearance, the disciples having brought with them Thomas, in the hope of seeing Jesus, the Master returned to them. There is something peculiarly attractive about the way the brethren treated the sorrowful Thomas. Though he refused to believe all they told him, he was not cast off. They dealt tenderly with this man of brooding mind and sceptical spirit, who said that unless he himself saw the wounds of Jesus, and touched them, he would not believe. Silently Jesus passed inside the room with the salutation of "Peace," and immediately addressed Thomas, asking for his finger and his hand, saying, "Behold My hands." Those hands, so ragged and torn with heavy nails, revealed God's purpose for saving the world. In the unexpected outcome of the crisis through which the disciples had passed the revelation appeared. Their eyes were opened to see it, and the sight of the hands of Jesus kindled in Thomas a warmth and light which inspired his soul to accept the truth. Overwhelmed by the impression made upon him, Thomas replied in words of greater reverence than had ever been used before: "My Lord and my God." Jesus said, "Because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."[21] He acknowledged the exclamation of Thomas as a confession of faith in Himself as Divine, not simply in His resurrection, and reproved the disciple for his un-

[20] 1 Cor. xv. 7. [21] St. John xx. 29.

readiness to accept the testimony of his brethren as confirming the knowledge which he already possessed of His Person and work.

From Jerusalem the disciples returned to Galilee, and the fishermen to their boats.[22] After they had toiled one whole night with their nets in vain, they heard, in the early morning before the sun had dispersed the grey mist on the water of the lake, a voice from a Person on the shore, whom they did not at first know, calling to them: "Children, have ye any meat?" And they answered "No." He said, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." [23]

The miracle immediately reminded them of a similar incident when first they realized the power of their Master, and John said to Peter, "It is the Lord." [24] Without further hesitation Peter seized his coat and impetuously threw himself into the sea to swim to the shore. The other disciples followed in their boat, dragging the net containing the fish.[25] As soon as they were come to land they saw a fire of charcoal burning there, with fish upon it and bread by the side. Jesus said, "Bring the fish which ye have now caught." Peter went at once and drew the net to land, and found it "full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three." None of the disciples dared ask a question, knowing the Person who seemed anxious about their welfare to be their Lord. He invited them to breakfast, and gave them bread and fish. Then followed Peter's examination. There was no enquiry about knowledge or faith, but a more important question was addressed to him, about the relationship of the man to his Master. Jesus said, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?"—thy fellow disciples. He felt the rebuke, but, setting aside all comparison of himself with others, he answered, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Jesus said, "Feed My

[22] St. John xxi. 3–14.
[23] St. John xxi. 6.
[24] St. John xxi. 7.
[25] St. John xxi. 8.

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And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God

JOHN XX: 28

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Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory

Luke XXIV: 26

lambs." A second time the Lord asked if Simon loved Him, and a third time, and the disciple humbly answered, "Yes, Lord, Thou knowest." He said, "Shepherd My sheep," then solemnly added: "When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whithersoever thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." Finally, He said, "Follow Me." Peter, turning round, saw John also following, and idly asked, "What shall this man do?" Jesus said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me." The answer led to the idea that John would not die until Jesus came.

Forty days had passed since the crucifixion. Jesus had been seen many times by His disciples. He had given them instructions to teach and to baptize.[26] He promised them His continual presence and the power of an endless life. His appearances had been designed only for those who had previously known Him, to confirm their faith in Him and His resurrection power. His body had not been merely a human body subject to natural laws, although He handled natural things, and had spoken in a voice His disciples could understand. He became visible to human eyes by an outward manifestation appropriate to the situation He adopted.

At the crucifixion He was stripped of His garments; for His burial linen clothes wrapped His torn body; after His resurrection Peter and John saw the linen clothes lying in the tomb. An interesting conjecture may arise respecting the clothes He seemed to wear on the manifestations of His presence. But whether His garments were real articles of clothing made by human hands, or He only appeared to be dressed in earthly raiment, does not so much matter as the fact that He apparently showed Himself in a different guise on each separate occasion, so that He could not be immediately recognized. When we remember the description of His state at His Transfiguration, that His raiment was white and glistering, it

[26] St. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

is not incredible to assume that, as He willed to be visible to mortal eyes, He willed also in what character He could be seen, and in the accessories suitable for His appearance. In the narratives of the Evangelists it is the fact which absorbs their attention; the details connected with it are given as they concerned those who saw the risen Christ. The different manifestations become more credible by their difference. If He had appeared in the same manner and in His former habit to every one who saw Him, suspicion might have been aroused either from collusion or from His appearance being the product of their imagination. To Mary Magdalene he looked like a gardener. Now a Jerusalem gardener would not have been dressed in the costume of her beloved Master. On the way to Emmaus He appeared as a traveller, and not as a native of Jerusalem. His costume differed, therefore, from that of a gardener. In the upper room His clothing must have been as loose as that of a countryman for the opening of the inner garment to expose His side. Whatever it was, no obstacle would prevent Thomas seeing the wounds of his Lord.

In Galilee the disciples at first failed to recognize their risen Master when He stood on the lake shore. Whether the mist of the early morning enshrouded His form, or He differed from His habitual appearance, doubt filled the minds of the fishermen regarding the Figure on the beach.

It is not necessary to assume that the risen Saviour wore no real clothes, nor will the claims of the statements of the Evangelists for our acceptance become unreasonable because in His invisibility His garments vanished with Him. On two occasions before His death He disappeared from view: once at Nazareth, and again in Jerusalem when the people sought to kill Him.

He had told His disciples during the last evening they spent together that it was expedient for them that He should go away; that the world would see Him no more, but He would come again to them.

For the proper appreciation of a person it is often necessary

for that person to be missed. New discoveries are made about him in his absence. It was not less so with Christ. His disciples could not at first understand how they were to benefit by their Master's departure until they were taught by the revelations of His presence after His resurrection.

The world never saw Him again. He appeared only to those who loved Him and were in sympathy with Him, and in their time of need, not to satisfy their curiosity, but for their comfort.

From whence He came no one knew, nor whither He went. He appeared suddenly as one already present though hidden from mortal sight, and as suddenly vanished.

These outward manifestations seemed necessary for a time as a means of instruction so that His disciples might become accustomed to realize His spiritual presence when bodily absent from them.

Further evidence and the climax of all the evidence is furnished by the final disapperance of the risen Jesus. He met His disciples again in Jerusalem and led them towards Bethany. Out of the eastern gate they passed, down the hill, across the Kedron, by the garden of tragic memory, and up the familiar slope of Olivet, to the summit of the ridge from whence an expansive view of the historic past may easily be gained. In the distance before them lay, deep in the recesses of the mountains, the Sea of Death in lustrous blue; like a wall beyond it stands, in solemn grandeur, the mount on which Moses stood to view the promised land. Behind the disciples the Holy City rested, unconscious of its future doom. Beneath their feet was the little village of Bethany, where lived the friends of Jesus, Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead, and his sisters. On every side the prospect grew in extent as their eyes turned first in one direction and another from the point of vantage where the little group of disciples gathered round their Lord to hear His last words and receive His final blessing. He told them to wait in Jerusalem for the fulfilment of His promise of the Holy Spirit, their Guide for the future;

then, lifting up His hands, He blessed them and ascended into heaven. They saw Him go. They watched His retreating Figure rising above them until a cloud hid Him from their sight.[27] Angelic witnesses, appearing before their astonished gaze, told them He would come again just as He had gone.[28] Convinced alike by human sense and Divine assurance, the disciples were satisfied.

His Ascension did not mean His passing to some distant shore beyond the earth on which we live, but a withdrawal from human sight that men might find Him by faith for ever present in a spiritual order of a heavenly kind, far above the life of earth; not a change of position so much as a change of existence; not a change from one locality to another, but from one condition to another.

The symbols and expressions representing a better state refer to every place on earth where He may be found.[29] He is here below, filling all who are in fellowship with Him, all who love Him, with His power to live the life that overcometh the world, the life above nature, above its aches and pains and disappointments, above even death itself. The veil of sense that hides from men the fulness of His life will some day be severed; then the life which is here in process will be complete in Him in Whom it is in perfection. The earthly life of man, with all its human needs and human woe, is kept in its place by an outward form of government which is the badge of man's servitude. As the life of Christ in man grows into His likeness His life of love develops in His followers, His kingdom comes among men, liberty increases until it is possible to conceive a state of perfection where universal love will prevail and Jesus the Saviour reign as King eternal.

The Ascension of Jesus was the exaltation of humanity; it perfectly identifies the earthly and the heavenly body, visibly unchanged to the last verge of sight from its resurrection state, and we are reminded by this fact that the Resurrection and

[27] Acts i. 9. [28] Acts i. 11.
[29] Eph. ii. 6, i. 20; St. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Eph. iii. 17; Phil. iii. 20.

Ascension are organically connected. As the angels expressly declared that Jesus will return as He went, it is not mere assumption to believe that in heaven we shall see our Lord as the disciples saw Him at His departure, but not in garments made by human hands; and if we behold Him in the body of His Resurrection and Ascension, we may not unreasonably expect to recognize those whom we have known on earth who are one with Him.[30]

In the expectation of His promise the disciples turned towards Jerusalem, retraced their steps to the Holy City, and there in patience waited.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that the Apostles believed that Jesus rose from the dead and returned to the Father. Had His career closed with His death, humanly speaking, we should have heard no more of Him. Apart from the conviction in the minds of the disciples that He had risen from the dead, the Gospel of Jesus would have had no future. It was in virtue of this conviction that Christianity became possible. This is perhaps the greatest miracle of all.

Those who hesitate to believe in the wonderful works of Jesus, who cannot reconcile their experience of life with His death and resurrection, stand face to face with the stupendous change He wrought in His disciples. From the depth of despair, when they saw Him die, they were roused to a pitch of enthusiasm which captured the world. And this change occurred in a few weeks. Between the crucifixion and the first preaching of the great news of salvation — a gap of fifty days — something happened, a miracle so vast, a movement so vital, that it not only removed from the timorous and shrinking followers of Jesus the shadow of fear, but their character was altered, and through them the whole history of the world.

At His death the disciples passed out of sight; they hid themselves behind closed doors for fear of the Jews. Fifty days later they stood in the midst of the multitudes who had

[30] Compare the scene of the Transfiguration, p. 271.

witnessed the death of Jesus to proclaim the great fact of His resurrection. Rumour has a transient influence; fact is a permanent force. The announcement of the fact ran like fire through the populace; a new light streamed into their minds, a new force moved in their hearts, a new society, the Church, still existing, was begotten by the Spirit of God Who came to reveal the truth of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God. New life, new joy, the victory over sin and death, came through His triumph. Many people who had watched Jesus die believed all the disciples said about His resurrection.

The Kingdom of God appeared in the hearts of men. It has never ceased to manifest itself wherever it has been proclaimed. Jesus is the King Eternal, as He is the Redeemer of mankind. And to those who find in Him their Saviour, accept Him as their Lord, and look for His appearing, He vindicates His claim to be able to give them life for evermore.

THE END

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